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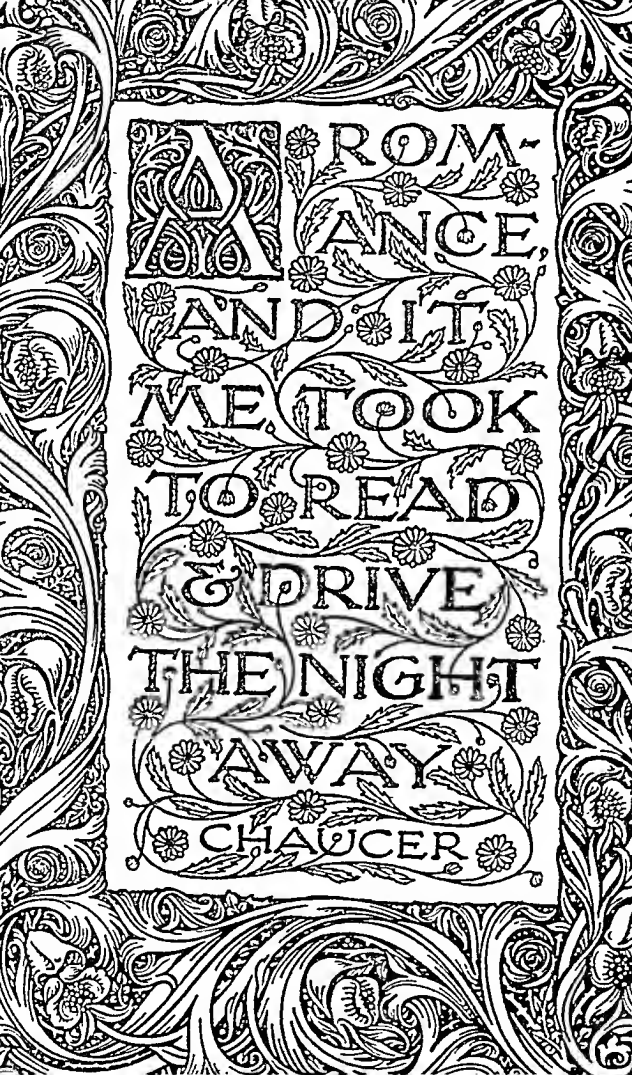
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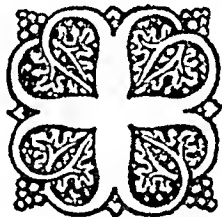


The image shows a black and white decorative book cover. The central panel contains the text:

FROM
ANCE,
AND IT
ME TOOK
TO READ
& DRIVE
THE NIGHT
AWAY
CHAUCER

The text is surrounded by a dense, intricate border of floral and foliate motifs, including roses, leaves, and scrolling vines. The overall style is reminiscent of late 19th-century decorative bookbinding.

GUDRUN
DONE INTO
ENGLISH *by*
MARGARET
ARMOUR *9 1/2*



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INTRODUCTION

IN the place they occupy in the national literature and in the relation which they bear to one another, the German *Nibelungenlied* and the *Gudrun* resemble the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* of the Greeks. In the *Nibelungenlied* the tragic fate of Troy has its counterpart in the total extinction of the Burgundians, while in both the *Odyssey* and the *Gudrun* the accompaniment to battles and adventures is always the beat of the waves.

The *Gudrun* is based on a legend preserved in the folk-lore of the races which peopled the shores of the North Sea, and may have been suggested by the ever-renewed strife between spring and winter, light and darkness.

The battle between Hagen of Ireland and Hetel of the Hegeling land is mentioned in the later of the two *Eddas*. There, when the pursuing father, having fought the foe from dawn to dusk, has withdrawn to his ships, his daughter Hilda visits the battlefield by night and restores the dead to life by her magic arts. Day after day the battle is resumed, and every morning the slain warriors arise to renew the conflict, which is supposed to endure till the gods at last perish.

A skald of the time of Ragnar-Lodbrok gives a rendering of the saga more closely resembling the German one. Another version occurs in the writings

of Saxo Grammaticus, while in Shetland still another is found in ballad form as late as the eighteenth century.

But the honour of having fashioned a noble and coherent epic out of the material belongs to a nameless German poet of the twelfth century. With the naïveté of his time, and its indifference to anachronism, he tames the rude figures of antiquity to the life of courts and gives them the setting with which he himself is familiar, and which is most likely to interest his patrons. So we see a grim old heathen type like Wate singing masses for the dead on the Wülpensand, while the sea-maiden, who, in mythological times, would have announced to Gudrun her near deliverance, has become an angel of God. The griffin who carried off the little prince while his attendants were absorbed by other matters was as unlikely a guest at a mediæval hightide as at a court festival of to-day, and it is curious to find young Hagen acquiring magic strength, like Siegfried, by drinking the blood of baleful beasts, and shortly afterwards winning the confidence of a shipload of pilgrims by speaking Christ's name boldly.

But any incongruity between the old material and the new setting is amply atoned for by the spirited, and picturesque charm which the poem exhales. Of the character-drawing a poet of any age or land might be proud. The Hilda of the first generation we see only as a beautiful and queenly figure, but the Hilda of the second develops from the coaxing and rather cunning maiden, who invites Horant to sing secretly in her chamber, and who falls in with his scheme for deceiving her father, into the wise and heroic woman whose counsel to keep the castle gates barred would, if followed, have saved her daughter and foiled the

foe. So dominating is her personality that the warriors are afraid to face her after the defeat on the Wülpensand. Even the redoubtable Wate, who bore the news, "rode fearfully."

But it is in Gudrun, of the third generation, that the heroic qualities blossom fairest. She is frank and courageous throughout—a good lover and a good hater. Scorning false modesty when Herwig's knightly prowess wins her heart, she makes an open and dignified avowal of her love. And when carried away captive, she holds her head high and undaunted amid insults and the most barbarous ill-usage. She is generous, though never soft. When the tables are at last turned on her oppressors, and the chivalrous, but undesired, Hartmut is about to perish at Wate's hand, she yields to his sister's entreaties and calls on her lover Herwig to part the fray. But when Gerlint, the "she-wolf," falls at her feet crying, "Now deliver us, O Princess, from Wate and his men. If thou hinder it not, my end is at hand!" she answers, "I hear thee pray me to show thee grace. How can I do that? Nothing in this world hast thou ever given me that I asked for. Thou wert ever pitiless toward me: wherefore I hate thee from my heart." Practical good sense, also, must be added to her virtues. It was through her wise and masterful match-making that the hate between the Hegelings and the Normans was ended, "and they forgot that ever their knights had slain one another."

German scholarship places the date of the *Gudrun* somewhere in the last decade of the twelfth century, a period bounded on the one side by the *Nibelungenlied*, by which it was influenced, and, on the other, by the *Sigune und Schionatulander* of Wolfram von Eschenbach, which it influenced in turn.

From the beginning the popularity of the *Gudrun* never equalled that of the *Nibelungenlied*, probably because the heroes figuring in it were not such favourites with the inland folk as Siegfried and his circle, and perhaps, also, because the mouth of the Scheldt, where Hetel ruled, was an unfamiliar region. Soon it disappears altogether and it is rather startling to think that, but for the enlightened initiative of one man, this poem which now ranks so high in world-literature would have been lost. Its preservation was due to the passion of Kaiser Maximilian I. for all things mediæval. Shortly after 1502 the great collection of old poems called the *Ambraser Handschrift* was begun by his order, and when this storehouse of genius was discovered in 1825 the *Gudrun*, which was found there in one handwriting only, was given again to the world.

I have followed the mediæval text as edited by Bartsch, and have rendered it into slightly archaic English prose, partly because that seemed to me to be the best way of preserving the atmosphere of the original, and partly because some years ago the *Nibelungenlied* was rendered by me in the same manner, and I should like the two sagas to be companions in English as they are in German.

MARGARET ARMOUR.

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NOTE

THE poem of *Gudrun* is extant in only one MS., copied between 1502 and 1515 by a Hans Reid of Bozen at the order of Maximilian I. This was probably copied from a thirteenth-century MS. The real original dates back to the last decade of the twelfth century.

The principal editions are those of Bartsch (1865 and 1885), Martin (1872 and 1902), and Symons (1883). The metrical translation by Mary Pickering Nichols (1889) is worthy of note. The translation used for the present edition was first published in 1928.

FIRST ADVENTURE

THE KING OF IRELAND HOLDS A HIGHTIDE

THERE grew up in Ireland a great and high-born king; his name was Siegebant and the name of his father was Ger. His mother was called Uta, and was a king's daughter. Her love, by reason of her great virtue, was worthy of the land's ruler.

To Ger, the mighty king, as is well known, many castles were subject. He was overlord of seven princes' realms, and had therein four thousand knights, or more, with whom to win daily both wealth and honour.

Young Siegebant was bidden to the court, that he might learn there, against the day he had need of it, to ride with the spear, hurling it, and covering his body with the shield, that when he stood before the enemy he might the better prevail. He grew to be old enough to bear weapons, and was skilled in all knightly matters; wherefore vassals and kinsmen had cause to praise him; nor found he any weariness therein.

Death divided Ger and Uta soon after, as it divideth the noble still to their great sorrow, Yea, in all kings' lands we must daily await the proof thereof, to our deep grief.

Because Siegebant's mother was now a widow the good and famous knight wooed none with the purpose of marriage, and many a noble king's daughter longed for him in vain.

Then his mother counselled him to take a wife,

that his land and he himself might profit thereby, and that, after great heaviness and his father's death, he and his kinsmen might enjoy again mirth and much gladness.

His mother's teaching pleased him well and he followed it, as is meet with the counsel of friends. He bade them woo for him one that dwelled in Norway, the best in any land, and his kinsmen helped him thereto with good will. They tell us that she was betrothed to him, and that many fair maidens and seven hundred knights followed her from Friedeschotten. They went with her gladly, for they knew the young king by report. They that journeyed with her brought her into the country with all the honour due to a high-born maiden, after the custom of kings; and all who rejoiced to see her hasted forth to meet her, that the road was full of folk to the distance of three miles and a half at the least. From the press of the people on all sides flowers and grass were trodden down by the way. It fell at the time when the green cometh forth, and when all the birds in the wood sing their best songs. Many merry youths rode with her, and many sumpters bare the raiment which her followers brought from their home. A thousand mules came with her, laden with treasure and apparel.

When the west wind drove her forward on the high waves she was received right sweetly on a march between two lands. Good lodging was given her by the young king. The noble maiden was welcomed with tourneying, and when, after much striving, this was ended, she was conducted into Ger's land, where she became mighty and far-famed in after days.

All the service they could render her they gave willingly. Rich saddle-cloths reached down to the

grass over the hoofs of good horses. Ah, how merry of his cheer was the Prince of Ireland! When it was time for him to kiss the beautiful maiden the folk pressed in about him, and many a rich boss on the clashing shields resounded, for they could not be kept apart. On the morrow envoys were sent forward to tell of her coming into the king's land, where, by the side of that knight, she was to wear the crown. Later she became the queen there and deserved much of the hero.

That they should be wedded straightway seemed fitting to none, for she was a king's daughter, and he not yet dubbed a knight. He must first wear a royal crown. His kinsmen helped him towards this, and afterwards he won a fair name. Five hundred youths got their swords at the same time. Whatsoever they needed was given them: horses, vesture and all manner of apparel. The young king's honour suffered no scathe. He ruled long in Ireland on such wise that it was never abased. He judged whom it behoved him to judge, and avenged the wrongs of the poor. He gave freely of his riches, and was a valiant knight. His lands brought him in great wealth, and had his wife, the queen, ruled over thirty kingdoms, her nature was such that she would have given it all away.

They tell us that at the end of three years, she bare the king a beautiful child, who was christened and afterwards called by his name, Hagen: the story of whom is well known.

They had him well reared and diligently seen to. Did he take after his kinsmen he could not fail to be a knight indeed. Wise women and fair maidens had charge of him: to his father and mother he was the food of their eyes.

When he was grown to his seventh year he might

often be seen among the knights, for he wearied with the women and liked to be with the men. But to these he afterwards became a stranger, for he was borne far from them. Wherever the child saw weapons at court (and many he saw) he would ask to be clad in helmet and coat of mail. To this also he became a stranger, although his heart was set thereon.

One day Siegebant sat on the palace steps, and his wife spake to him under a cedar:

"We have honour in plenty; but at one thing I marvel, nor will I be silent concerning it."

He asked what it was, and the noble woman said: "It irketh me heart and soul, yea, grieved am I, that I see thee so seldom among thy bold knights, to the joy of my bright eyes."

The king answered, "Wherefore wouldst thou see me at the head of my knights? Tell me, my queen. For thy sake I will readily undertake much."

She answered, "No living man is so mighty as thou art, nor hath so many castles and wide lands, nor so great abundance of silver and precious stones and heavy gold. Therewith our deeds accord not; which maketh my life a worthless thing to me. When I was a maiden at Friedeschotten (hear me, O king, without anger) I saw my father's men striving daily after honour. A king mighty in name as thou art, and as I hear thee called, should often be seen tourneying with his knights, that he may win fame for himself and his land. It showeth a weak nature in great princes to amass measureless wealth, and not to share it willingly with their warriors. How else shall the deep wounds be healed which these receive in their lord's battles?"

The king answered, "Lady, thou shamest me. Diligently, and with a steadfast heart, I will so do

that none shall need to teach me henceforth the customs of noble kings."

She said, "Summon then the knights of thy realm, and bid them be given treasure and apparel. I, also, will send for my kinsmen, and welcome them kindly. We shall be the merrier for it."

Said the King of Ireland to his wife, "I will do thy will gladly, even as many a man before hath agreed to call a hightide to please a woman. I will summon our kinsmen to court."

The queen answered, "I am well content. To five hundred women I will give raiment, and to four-and-sixty maidens fine vesture." To which, when he heard it, the king agreed.

Eighteen days after he had resolved to give a hightide he sent word to all his friends and kinsmen, that those who were minded to ride into Ireland should wait and look forward to the time when winter should be over and the summer come.

They tell us how he had seats builded of wood brought from virgin forests, and gave orders to make benches ready for six thousand knights, to which work the king's butlers and stewards sufficed.

They began to ride from many quarters, till there came in gallant array to the court of the Irish king eighty-and-six thousand guests, who were well cared for by his command.

From the store-room of the king were brought forth garments for all that desired them. They also received shields and Irish horses. The noble queen, too, adorned many with raiment. To at least a thousand women she gave gorgeous apparel, and to many damsels what became them well—costly silk robes trimmed with gold-embroidered bands, and decked with precious stones. The lovely maidens looked

well in their attire. Apparel was given to all who wanted it.

Then the horses were seen prancing, held by squires bearing shields and bright spears. High-born Uta sat at the window in gracious state, and the host gave his guests leave to tourney. Many a bright helmet grew dim. The noble women sat so near that they could see all the knightly sports.

The tourney lasted long, as often happeneth. The king showed himself among his guests, and for this the queen, his wife, praised him, as was meet; for she saw him from where she sat with her women, above at a window. And when he had tilted as be-seemed a prince, he bade his guests cease from their toil, which he could afford to do with honour, and led them towards the women.

Thereupon fair Uta greeted both strangers and friends sweetly, thus winning the good will of many welcome guests. None needed to shame them of her gifts. The knights tarried awhile by the women, for each knew that his host desired to show him honour at the hightide. But towards evening the valiant strangers were bidden return to their tourneying.

The hightide endured till the ninth day. Whatsoever knightly sports were practised, the minstrels had little need to complain. They worked that they too might profit. Loud sounded the trombones and trumpets. Fluting and harping, twanging and singing, whistling and fiddling—they did all with a will, and won thereby the more goodly apparel.

On the tenth morning—list to the wonder—after all their joy, many must weep. New marvels arose at the hightide. Heart's heaviness followed on their gladness.

While the host sat merrily among his guests, there

came one of the minstrels who was skilled beyond belief; he played better than them all, that the princes could not but mark him. A beautiful maiden led the child of the Irish king thither by the hand, with whom went women of the court who tended him well, and kinsmen of the king who reared him with care.

They heard a loud noise in the hall. All the folk began to laugh, and they that had the care of young Hagen pressed up close to the minstrel, that they lost sight of the damsel and the child.

Then misfortune drew nigh to the king, wherefrom he and Uta suffered heart's heaviness. The wicked Devil had sent his envoy far into the land, and it ended ill for them all.

A great griffin came flying down, that Siegebant might lose what he had reared with love. Through the stark griffin he lost his young son. Over the spot where his wings bare him he threw a shadow as of a cloud; certes he was strong. By reason of their merrymaking the folk took little heed, and the damsel stood without the hall quite alone. The trees fell before the strength of the griffin, and when the maiden saw the bird flying she saved herself and let the child go. So strangely it fell that one might write it a miracle.

The griffin swooped down and caught the child with his claws, showing plain that he was grim and evilly disposed. Bold and good heroes wept later. The child started to scream loud, for he was sore afraid. High the griffin bare him with its strength, far up into the heavens towards the clouds; which caused the king of Ireland to mourn.

The friends of Siegebant heard the news, and sorrowed greatly because of the child's death. Heavy-

hearted were the king and his wife; with one accord they all grieved for the fair child.

The noble company brake up in sorrow; the strength of the griffin had so dismayed them that they separated mourning. Inly sad were they all. The host wept sore: his breast was wet with tears; but the noble queen with seemly words bade him cease.

"Did all the world lie dead," she said, "it must be even as God hath ordained."

The guests would have ridden away, but the queen said, "Tarry, noble knights, here at court, and scorn not our silver and gold. We would give you thereof, for we love you well." Whereupon the knights bowed before her, and began to thank her.

By order of the king they were given many rich silks uncut. Some among them had ridden from far lands. He gave them horses also, some for women and some of the Irish breed, very high and strong; and gold thereto and unweighed silver. The king bade his guests be well and kindly cared for.

The queen said farewell to many women and high-born maidens, whose bodies were adorned with her gifts and who wore goodly apparel.

So the hightide ended, and they left Siegebant's country.

God worketh great wonders: none shall gainsay it. Before this, three king's daughters had been borne thither by the griffin's prowess, and were nigh to that place. How they had been fed for so long none knoweth, unless God in his mercy had provided for them.

So Hagen needed not to tarry there alone. He found the fair damsels in a cave, who, when they spied him creeping on the mountain, deemed it was a wild dwarf or some wondrous thing come out of the sea; but later, when he had drawn nigh, he was welcomed by them kindly.

Hagen saw them, and they drew back into the cave, for their souls were full of dread, till they found it was a Christian. Afterwards by his labour he lightened their hearts of much sorrow.

Then said the eldest, "How darest thou approach us, since God hath given us this shelter? Seek thy comrades in the wild sea. We have trouble enough; right woeful is our state here."

The noble child answered, "Let me bide with you, for, trow me, I be a Christian born. One of the wild griffins brought me to this rock. I would fain dwell with you, for in good sooth I cannot dwell here alone."

Then they welcomed the little child kindly, and were advantaged later by his service. They began to question him whence he was come, which irked him greatly by reason of his hunger.

"I suffer sore for lack of food," he said, "and would thank you to share with me your meat and drink. I have not eaten for three days, for the griffin hath borne me hither full an hundred long miles."

One of the maidens answered, "It so happeneth that we have never seen either the butler or the

HOW HAGEN WAS CARRIED OFF II

steward that bring us our food." They praised God for his goodness and were wise in their tender years.

Then they began to search for roots and plants, that they might feed the beloved of Siegebant. Of all that they lived upon there they brought him abundance. It was a strange dish, I ween, that the damsels fetched for him. But hunger forced him to eat of the roots, for bitter death is hard to bear. Many days he abode by the maidens, and did them good service; and they, on their side, tended him; ye may trust me for that.

So in hardship he passed his young years, till in the midst of their troubles a new and strange thing befell them by the cave.

I know not from what quarter a pilgrim band came sailing across the sea towards the cliffs, but they were in sore peril from the fierce waves; wherefore the homeless maidens were affrighted the more.

The vessel brake asunder, and the folk perished. Then the old griffins came and carried many dead men to their nest; by reason whereof not a few women that asked news of them sorrowed sore.

When the old griffins had fed their young, the old griffins betook them across the sea, I know not whither. They had left a grim neighbour behind them upon the mountain.

On the shore where the folk were drowned—it was a band of pilgrims—Hagen saw their stuff lying, and thought to find their food among it; but because of the cruel griffins, he crept down to the beach right warily.

There he found naught save a man in armour, which brought him in peril through the birds. He grudged not the labour to pull off the harness, and the bow and weapons he found close at hand. The boy clad

himself therein, then above in the sky he heard a wind. He had tarried over-long, and the old griffin came up, while he was yet too far from the cave.

It swooped down angrily to the beach, and the neighbour it thought to have left at home it had fain swallowed then and there. But bold Hagen bare him on knightly wise, and with his childish strength shot swift arrows from the drawn bow; yet could not wound the bird. How could he then escape? He essayed it next with the sword, and heard the maidens wailing and weeping. Despite his youth he was grim enough. He struck a wing from the griffin's shoulder, and hewed a wound stark and deep in its bone, that it got not from the place alive.

He had conquered: one was dead; but straightway came the other, that brought him in grievous peril. Yet in the end he slew them all, young and old. God in heaven helped him, for with his own strength he had, certes, not prevailed.

When he had wrought the wondrous deed, he summoned the maidens from the cave, and said, "Come ye forth to the air and sunshine, since God alloweth us some joy."

They received him lovingly and kissed him many times on the mouth. Now that their tyrant lay dead, what was to hinder them from wandering over the mountain, near or far, as they willed?

When he had thus ended their great wretchedness, the homeless boy learned to shoot so well that flying birds could not escape him. When he went in search of food he hit whatever he took aim at. He was bold-hearted and fearless, and knew the forest well. Ha! what swift leaps he learned from the beasts! Like a wild panther he roamed the hill. He reared himself, for he was without kin.

HOW HAGEN WAS CARRIED OFF 13

How often, also, he went down to the beach for sport! He saw live fishes in the waves, and, could they have been of use to him, would have caught them, but no fire smoked in his kitchen, which grieved him daily.

From his shelter he went into the wood, and saw there many beasts bold and swift. Among them was one that would have devoured him, but he slew it with his sword, that it felt his anger sore. It was like aameleon, and he skinned it and became strong thereby, for he grew athirst for its blood; and when he had drunk his fill thereof he won great strength; for which many thanked him later. The hero wrapped him in the beast's skin. Then close at hand he found a lion, that fled from him in vain. Swiftly he overtook it, yet wounded it not, but greeted it as a friend.

He thought on the beast he had slain, and carried it home, for the maidens always profited by his kindness; and now the unwonted food cheered them, mind and body.

Fire they lacked, though they had food in plenty; but he struck sparks out of a hard stone, that they were provided with what had failed them heretofore. There was none to aid them: they roasted the meat themselves.

When they had eaten thereof they were strengthened, and their minds, likewise, grew in wisdom by God's grace. Their bodies also were as fair and as worthy of praise as if each of them had been at home in her father's land. Wild Hagen, too, had the strength of twelve men, the which won him great glory in his time. It irked both him and the maidens sore to tarry evermore in that waste, so the damsels bade him lead them down to the sea, and betook them thither full of shame, for the clothes they had on

were none too fine. They had woven them with their own hands, when young Hagen found them in their exile.

For four-and-twenty days they fared through the forest, till early one morning the youth saw a heavy-laden ship that hailed from Garadic. The homeless maidens were weary with their journey.

Hagen called aloud and gave not over, albeit the wind had lashed the waves to a roar, that the ship began to crack. They that drew nigh therein, when they saw the damsels on the beach, feared they had been wild sea-maidens.

The master of the vessel was from Salmê, and knew Hagen and his kinsmen well, for he was their neighbour. But none of the pilgrims guessed that it was Siegebant's son from Ireland.

The count forbade his helmsman to steer for the shore, whereupon the homeless youth begged him for the love of God to carry him from the wild coast; and when he had boldly spoken Christ's name, they were no more afraid.

The count, with eleven others, sprang into a boat, and deemed the time long till he learned whether they were spirits of the wood, or wild mermaidens. Never in his life had he seen such fair creatures.

He began to ask or he won to the shore, "What do ye here, if you be Christian children?" For he saw their beautiful bodies wrapped round with fresh moss. Whereupon the homeless ones entreated to be taken with him.

The youngest answered courteously, "I would have thee know, my lord, that I come from Iserland, where my father was king. Woe is me! From them that should have reared me I am all too far removed."

Then said the noble knight, "God that allowed you not to tarry by your kin hath yet done well by you. By his grace ye are delivered from sore distress, since I have found you here on this coast."

How they had escaped death through the griffin, when it bare them to its nest, he would have asked them in vain, for they had suffered much that they could tell the tale of no more.

Then said the rich count to the youth, "Friend and comrade, since the maidens have told me their story, let me hear thine, for I would gladly know thy land and thy kin."

"I will tell thee," answered wild Hagen. "I too was brought hither by one of the griffins. My father's name is Siegebant. I am from Ireland, and have long dwelled miserably with these damsels."

Then they all asked, "How hast thou remained so long alive beside the griffin?" And Hagen answered, "Through the goodness of God, and, certes, I have cooled my anger on the bird, and eased my heart."

Then said he of Garadie, "Tell me how thou wert delivered."

"I slew them, from the oldest to the youngest; not one of them escaped. I barely came off with my life."

They cried all together, "Thy body must be strong. Men and women may well praise thee. A thousand of us had never done it. It fell out happily for thee."

The count and his attendants began to fear the child, for his strength was measureless. And they suffered from it later. They would have taken his

weapons from him by guile, but he wrathfully withstood them. His coming might well have been to their hurt.

The count spake then: "After the many troubles I have seen, a good thing hath befallen me. If thou art kin to Prince Siegebant of Ireland, I will hold thee captive for ransom. And I would tell thee this: thou art come at the right hour, for thy friends have done much hurt to Garadie, my land, that lieth all too close to them. They made war on it, and slew my knights, and took them in battle."

"For what they did to thee I am blameless. Take me to them, and I ween I will make an end of your hate and strife. Of thy grace, let me hope to see my kinsmen."

The count answered the youth, "Thou shalt tarry here, my captive for ransom. The fair maidens also shall be of my court. I would fain win honour through them in my land."

Hagen deemed this both a wrong and a shame, and said angrily, "I will not be thy captive. None that prized his life would ask it. Good mariners, bring me to my country. I will reward you gladly, and pay you with treasure and apparel. He would have my maidens for his court. They need not his help. If any be wise among you, let him follow my counsel. Turn your sail, and steer the ship to Ireland."

The folk would have bound him, as their lord commanded, but he stood too near them, and they came in peril. He threw thirty of them by the hair into the water. The pilgrims learned the strength of his body.

Had not the gentle maidens come between, he would have slain the knight of Garadie. High and low, they were all one to him. The mariners must

needs steer for Ireland. They made haste, lest they should perish, for they dreaded Hagen's wrath. They were one and all stricken with terror when they saw him angry.

As he drew nigh to his father's land (its great castle he had known aforetime), he caught sight of a high palace by the water, that had three hundred strong and goodly towers.

Siegebant and his wife dwelled there, and the pilgrims feared for their lives, lest the Irish king, being aware of them, should slay them all. But Hagen, to his honour, hindered this.

The valiant man said to the strangers, "I will gladly make your peace. Albeit I have no power in the land, I will send messengers thither, and will end the old hate between you and the king. Whoso would deserve great wealth of me, and is ready to bear the king the message that I send, to him will I give precious gold, yea, richly will my father and mother reward him.

He bade twelve pilgrims ride forward. "Now ask the king," said the youth, "if he would see Hagen, his son, for whom a griffin hath caused him to mourn. Well I wot the noble king will not believe it. Ask my mother then, that she tell you whether she will have me for her child, if she find the mark of a golden cross on my breast."

The envoys rode from the harbour into the land where Queen Uta and Siegebant abode.

The king heard that they were from Garadie, and he and his men were wroth, because they were his foes. He asked them how they durst come thither, whereupon one of them answered, "Young Hagen, thy son, hath sent us. If any be fain to see him, he is so nigh that it may easily come to pass."

Then spake Prince Siegebant, "Vain is thy deceit. The child is so clean gone from me that I ofttimes muse heavily thereon."

"If thou believe it not, ask thy wife, the queen; he hath been much with her. If there be a golden cross on his breast, and it be proven thereby that the knight sayeth sooth, ye may claim him for your child, an ye will."

This was told to Queen Uta, who rejoiced at the news, for she had many a time been heavy-hearted, and she said, "Let us ride forth and learn how the matter standeth."

So the host bade the horses be saddled for himself and the chief men of his court.

Thereupon one of the pilgrims said to fair Uta, "Didst thou follow my counsel, thou wouldst bring apparel for the beautiful maidens that are come hither to thine honour; they are the court damsels of thy son."

So the women brought rich raiment with them, and many bold men went with the queen.

Hagen had come down from the ship and stood on the shore; and there they found the knight of Garadie by the side of the wanderer.

FOURTH ADVENTURE

HOW HAGEN WAS RECEIVED BY HIS FATHER AND MOTHER

WHEN Hagen saw men and women riding, he went towards them, for he was fain to see who came to greet him.

Then the king bade him welcome to his land, and said, "Art thou the knight that sent the envoys to us, and that claimeth the noble queen for thy mother? If the news be true, I rejoice from my heart."

Fair Uta spake courteously: "Bid the folk make room, and I will soon see whether he hath a right to the crown."

She found the very token on him, and welcomed him lovingly. With tearful eyes she kissed him on the mouth, crying, "I was sick, and now am healed. Thou art welcome, Hagen, my only child. Siegebant's friends may take comfort at last concerning thee."

Then the king approached with great joy, the hot tears flowing from his eyes for heart's love. He might well bear the youth good will.

The homeless maidens were then brought before Uta, who gave them cloaks of fur, both grey and divers colours, and fur-lined silks that suited their bodies well. Through the wife of King Siegebant their sorrow was lightened. They were clad as

beseemed them, and when they went hung with rich broidered girdles, they were no longer ashamed as heretofore. The host and his knights received them courteously.

Hagen prayed the king and all his folk to show favour to the men of Garadie for his sake, and to forgive the hurt and wrong done by them, and won grace for the pilgrims. When the king had kissed them in token of reconciliation, what they had lost in former strife was made good to them, which was greatly to their advantage and Hagen's honour. Nor did they wage war any more against the Irish king.

When Hagen had made peace for the guests, their provisions and baggage were carried ashore, that they might rest there for fourteen days; and for this the proud knights thanked him.

With joyful sounds they rode up from the sea; and many thronged to the castle of Baljân, because of the wondrous news that the great king's son was still alive. Scarce could they trow it.

After fourteen days they let the water-weary knights take their leave, and the king gave them a gift of bright gold. For his son's sake he desired them for true friends.

Hagen saw well to the maidens in his charge; he commanded that they should be well bathed, and did them tender observance. They were provided with rich garments, for he was wise in his young years.

So he grew to be a man, and practised with the warriors, doing whatsoever goeth to make a good knight, that, later, he was powerful in his father Siegebant's country. He learned what was seemly for one that was to rule over many heroes, and needed not to be ashamed. Fair women likewise praised him;

scarce would one trow how freely he gave of all he had; and thereto he was so bold that he avenged the wrongs of his friends. He upheld his honour in all things, that tales and songs concerning him were heard throughout the land. These recount how the noble young prince grew up in a wilderness among wild beasts, whereof none that he chased could outrun him by so much as one bound, or escape with its life. Many a wonder, I ween, had he and the maidens seen by the sea. His right name was Hagen, but he was called and known in all countries afterward as the Devil-king by reason of his strength. Bold Hagen earned his name well.

His kinsmen counselled him to take a wife, and it so happened that there was one nigh at hand, than whom none on earth was fairer. He had reared her himself; yea, in sore straits he had dwelled by her side. She was named Hilda, and was from India. She had shown him great love in bitter need, when first he found her in a cave, and he desired none from any kingdom before her.

His father bade him make haste to be knighted, with an hundred of his men, and to every one of his companions he gave a thousand marks for horses and apparel, the which seemed good to Hagen.

Then the king sent word to the princes round about, and made known to them when they should come. They found later how freely he could give. A year and three days from that time was the season fixed for the hightide. And the knights that wished to come made ready, and caused bright and gaily coloured shields to be wrought, and also costly saddles and breast-straps and bridles of rich gold.

The guests of the great king were lodged on a wide plain. All that they needed was done for them.

Tents were raised far and near, and from all quarters his friends were seen riding into the land.

Hagen, as was meet, commanded that all who desired to be knighted with him should be given raiment. A thousand of them were from foreign countries, and these he enriched with horses and apparel.

Then he said to his friends, "Ye counsel me to take the name of king. It were well if I loved from my heart her who shall wear the crown by my side. I will never rest till I have made good to her what she hath suffered."

And when his men asked him who the maiden was that should rule over them at court, he answered, "Hilda of India, who never in this world will bring shame on me or my friends."

When they heard this, both his father and mother were of his mind.

Six hundred youths or more were dubbed knights with Hagen; then according to Christian custom he and Hilda were annointed and crowned, and delayed not to ride at the head of their men.

The king's friends tilted gallantly by the way, and King Siegebant himself tourneyed with them. He was merry of his cheer, and heeded not the cost. And when they had ridden on knightly wise, the servants of the household were not idle, but brought out the seats broad and long, with the chairs and tables.

After the Mass had been sung, Queen Uta rode to the court, and many fair women with her, whom the young warriors welcomed right gladly. And when King Siegebant sat by Uta, and Hagen by Hilda, the folk said among themselves that he was fortunate in his dear son. In front of their tables the knightliness of their men was proven with the clash of many spears.

Then, when the Irish king was done eating, flowers and grass were trodden to the dust by his guests, for loud was the din of the tourney. All who were strong and hale tilted before the women. Four-and-twenty knights behind shields rode on to the plain, and strove together in many a gallant joust, while beautiful women watched them. This had been ill left undone.

The son of Siegebant rode himself in the tourney, and his dear one, seeing him, was not sorry. All he had owed to her in a strange land he made good to her now, for he was a valiant knight. And by the side of the host, amid the dust, rode fifteen kings, Christians and heathens, that held their lands from him, and served well both Siegebant and Hagen. The hightide endured long, and the joy thereof was great. Loud was the din of the smiting and of the throng.

Then the host bade his guests cease from their labours and go where the women sat.

Siegebant said to the kings who were beside him, "I give my land, the folk and the castles thereof near and far, to my son Hagen, and all my knights shall have him to their lord."

So when Siegebant had thus yielded up his right, Hagen began to give lands and castles in fee with good will. They that were to hold them deemed him so worthy of trust that they received them gladly.

Many hands were reached to the young king, that took them in his, as was the feudal custom. He gave treasure and raiment to his guests from far and near. The hightide of so kind a prince would not come amiss to poor folk in our day.

The damsels that he had brought with him into that country were at the court, and one of these was sent for and bidden go before Queen Hilda and the king. She came from Iserland, and was as fair as any

could wish. A young prince desired her for his wife, that had seen her by the queen, and so could swear that she was fit to wear a crown. She had been the companion of Queen Hilda, and a great kingdom was her reward.

Then his guests bade the king and his men farewell, and took the noble maiden with them to Norway, their home, where she lived happily after her many sorrows.

So Hagen began to rule in Ireland, and sorely punished the wrongdoers that he found among the people. Over eighty were beheaded inside of a year. After which he carried war into the land of his enemies, but for the sake of the poor let nothing be burnt. Yet, if any was overweening, the castles of that man were destroyed, and vengeance taken with deep death-wounds. In pitched battles he was a bold warrior, and over-proud knights were humbled by this devil-king; his foemen knew it to their cost.

So the hero lived merrily and was glad of his cheer.

His wife from India bare him a fair daughter, who was called Hilda, and whose story is well known.

This child wild Hagen caused to be reared on such wise that the sun never beat on her, and the wind seldom touched her. Noble women and the kinsmen he trusted most had charge of her.

Or she reached her twelfth year the royal maid was beautiful beyond compare, and her fame spread abroad.

Great and noble princes began to ponder how they might woo the daughter of wild Hagen. One of these dwelled in Waleis, near Denmark, and when he heard of her beauty he longed for her exceedingly. But Hagen scorned him and vowed he would take from him both his life and his honour. In his pride

Hagen killed all the envoys that were sent to woo the princess. He would give her to none that was less mighty than himself; and this news was noised abroad.

He hanged twenty envoys or more, even all that were sent after his daughter. They that could not avenge them were heavy-hearted.

Many that heard it desired her no more to wife; yet she lacked not good knights to woo her, for, as the proverb saith, "For every man that is proud, another is prouder still," and Hagen was to know sorrow from them that sought to win her.

FIFTH ADVENTURE

HOW WATE WENT TO IRELAND

IN Denmark, as is well known, there grew up a hero whose kinsmen dwelled in Sturmland, and reared him in honour. He was likewise overlord of Ortland. Certes, he was high-born and mighty.

One of his kinsmen, called Wate, who served him for castles and land, reared him with care, because of the blood tie between them. He taught him every virtue, and never let him from his sight.

Bold Horant, a king in Denmark, was Wate's sister's son, and afterwards earned well the crown that Hetel gave him for reward.

Great Hetel dwelled at Hegeling, near Ortland, and owned therein eighty castles or more. They that had the keeping of them served him daily with honour. He ruled over Friesland, land and sea, and held Dietmarsch and Waleis in his hand, for he was mighty and had many kinsmen; and thereto he was grimly bold, and often laid snares for his enemies.

Hetel was an orphan and had, therefore, need of a wife. Both his father and mother were dead that had left him the land; and, albeit, he had otherwise many kinsmen, he wearied among them.

The highest of these counselled the young king to wed one worthy of him, but the young knight answered, "I know none meet to be queen of the Hegelings, nor to be brought to my castle."

Then young Morunc of the Nibelung land said, "I know of one noble enough, and have heard that none on the whole earth is fairer. We might gladly seek to win her for thy dear one."

The king asked who this might be, and what her name was.

"Her name is Hilda," he answered, "and she dwelleth in Ireland. Her father is called Hagen, and is of the family of Ger. Came she hither, joy and bliss were thine for evermore."

"But it hath been told me," said Prince Hetel, "that her father is wroth if any woo her, and that by reason thereof many a noble man hath perished. I desire not the death of any kinsman."

"Send into Horant's country and bid him hither," Morunc answered. "He knoweth and hath seen all the ways of Hagen. We cannot compass this without his help."

"I will follow thy counsel," said Hetel, "since she is so fair. But when they go to win her thou must be with them, for I trust thee with good cause. If ever she be queen of the Hegelings, profit and honour shall be thine."

Thereupon he dispatched envoys into Denmark to Horant, his kinsman, and prayed the knight to visit him within seven days, if he was minded to do him a service.

When the envoys arrived and Horant heard the message, he was so willing to render faithful service that he gladly did what was asked of him; by reason whereof he came later in peril and sore straits.

He rode quickly to the court with sixty of his men, and after leaving his home went the faster, that he might learn wherein he could help his lord.

He and his comrades arrived there well apparelled on the seventh morning.

The king went to meet the good warrior, and saw that he had bold Frute of Denmark with him. He was glad to see them, for they eased him in part of his heaviness, and he said with a smile, "Thou art welcome, Frute, my kinsman."

Then Horant and Frute advanced, and he asked how it stood with them in Denmark. To which they both answered, "But a short time ago we gave many deadly wounds in battle."

He asked who had ridden against them.

"We have fought with them of Portugal. Their proud king would not let us be, and did us daily annoy on our marches."

"Let the matter rest," said young Hetel. "I ween old Wate will not yield the marches of Sturmland wherein he dwelleth. The man that won a castle from him would deserve lasting praise."

Then the heroes went in and sat down in a large hall, and Horant and Frute began to speak with young men's wisdom of the wooing of high-born women, while the young king hearkened gladly and rewarded them well.

Hetel asked Horant: "If thou know it, I pray thee tell me how it standeth with Hilda, the king's daughter, for I would fain send her my service and my greeting."

The bold knight answered: "Concerning that I have full knowledge. A fairer maiden I never saw than noble Hilda of Ireland, wild Hagen's daughter. Meet is she and worthy to wear a crown."

Hetel asked him then, "Might her father be won to give me the fair damsel? If I deemed him friendly, I would woo her, and would not cease to reward him that helped me to the maid."

"It may not be," said Horant. "None rideth as envoy into Hagen's land; nor am I myself in haste to do it. All that are sent thither are slain or hanged."

Whereat Hetel cried, "However much I might desire her, if he slew one of my envoys, Hagen of Ireland should forfeit his own life. Be he never so bold, he would suffer for his grimness."

Then spake Frute the knight: "Were but Wate thy messenger to Ireland, we might prosper, and bring thee the maiden. We must else be hewn to the heart with wounds."

To which King Hetel answered, "Send then to Sturmland. Wate will surely ride wherever I desire him to go. Summon also Irolt and his men from Friesland."

So the envoys hasted to Sturmland, where they found bold Wate among his knights, and bade him come to the king.

Wate marvelled what the king of the Hegelings could want of him, and asked if he should take with him helmet or harness, or any of his men.

To this one of the envoys answered, "We have not heard that he hath need of warriors; only that he would see thee."

Wate was willing to go. He left his castles and his land guarded, and when he got to horse there followed him only twelve of his men. He hastened to the court and arrived in the land of the Hegelings.

When the knight reached Kampatille Hetel was not sorry, and ran to meet him, considering how he should receive his old friend. He greeted him gladly, crying "Welcome, Sir Wate! It is long since I saw thee and sat by thee, what time we waged war on our foes."

"Good friends should hold together," Wate

answered, "that they may the better withstand their stark adversaries."

He grasped his hand as a friend, and the twain went apart and sat down.

The king was mighty, and Wate was high and proud in all his doings; and Hetel pondered how he could make him go to Ireland.

At last the young knight said, "I sent for thee, for I have need of envoys to ride into wild Hagen's land; and I know none better than thou, dear friend Wate. As an envoy thou art right eloquent."

Old Wate answered, "Gladly and well will I sue for aught that may be for thine honour. Trust me to bear it through to thy desire, if death hinder not."

"If stark Hagen agree to give me his fair daughter," said Hetel, "all my friends counsel me that I should make her queen of my land, and my heart inclineth thereto."

Then Wate spake out angrily, "He that said that to thee were not sorry if I died this day. None other, I ween, hath urged thee to this—that I bring thee fair Hilda—than Frute of Denmark; so well guarded is the maiden. I will not rest till Horant and Frute, that told thee of her beauty, are joined with me in this service."

So Hetel sent for them both straightway, and other of his kinsmen were also bidden come to the great king at his court, and he and Wate spake no more in secret.

When bold Wate saw Horant and Frute of Denmark he cried, "God reward you, ye heroes, that ye have desired so mine honour and my journey hither. Ye are eager that I ride as an envoy! Now shall ye both go with me, that we may deserve the favour

of the king. They that destroy my peace shall share my peril."

Horant the Dane answered, "I will gladly go. Even if the king let me tarry behind, I would not shun danger where fair women can be seen, that may bring joy to me and my kin."

"We must take seven hundred men with us on this journey," said Frute, "for Hagen alloweth honour to none: he deemeth himself so mighty. If he think to overcome us by force, we will abate his pride. Bid them build, O King, a ship of cypress-wood for the sea, goodly and strong to carry the men; let the mast be bound with silver, and get together the needful food. Let helmets be wrought well and with care, and good hauberks, to take with us. So shall we the better win wild Hagen's daughter. My nephew Horant, who is an artful man, shall stand at his stall, where I will gladly bear him company, and will sell buckles and bracelets, gold and precious stones to the women. So shall we avoid suspicion. We will take with us weapons and apparel for sale. And since the matter of Hagen's daughter is so perilous that none can win her save by war, let Wate himself choose whom he would to ride with him."

To this old Wate made answer, "I cannot play the merchant. Little leisure hath been mine for the amassing of goods. I have ever shared them with heroes; which I still am minded to do. I have little skill in the bringing of dainty presents to fair women. Since I am here by the counsel of my kinsman Horant, he knoweth right well how it standeth with Hagen: with his strength he is equal to six-and-twenty men. If he hear of this wooing we shall hardly escape. Bid them hasten, O King, to cover our vessel with planks, for it must be filled beneath with good knights

that will help us to fight, if wild Hagen allow us not to quit him in peace. A hundred warriors at the least must go with us to Ireland, with their battle harness; and Horant, my kinsman, with two hundred men shall stand at his stall, and fair women shall visit him. Let them also build three goodly ships to convey the horses alongside us, and meats, more than we shall consume in a year. We will tell Hagen that we fled from Sturmland because Hetel did evilly entreat us, and will go to the court straightway bearing Hilda and Hagen rich presents. So will the king show us favour. We will say, every one, that we be banished men, and thus win grace from wild Hagen, who will bid lodging be given to us strangers, and will let us want for little in his land."

Hetel asked the knights, "When will ye forth, dear friends?"

"When summer is come," they answered, "about the May time, our clothes will be ready, and we shall ride. Meanwhile, let what we have need of be fashioned carefully and well—the sails and oars, the ships and galleys that we shall take with us, that the waves of the deep sea harm us not."

"Ride home to your lands," said Hetel. "Spend nothing on horses and apparel. I will provide for all your men on such wise that no woman need shame her to look upon you."

So Wate took his leave and rode to Sturmland; and Horant and Frute returned straightway to Denmark, where they were called kings. They dreamed not of withholding service from Hetel.

At home Hetel declared his intent, and his carpenters worked busily. They built his ships with all their skill; the sides were well riveted with silver, and the masts were strong and goodly; they covered

the helm with bright gold, red like fire, for the king was rich. Since it was fixed that they should go, they prepared well for the voyage. Their cable was brought from afar, even from Arabia—so good an one hath never been seen—that they might the better sail from Hegeling across the deep sea.

Late and early they worked at the sails, for the king bade them make haste. They chose thereto silk of Abalie, the best they could find. They that fashioned them were not idle. Who will trow us when we tell that the anchor was wrought of silver? The king was set upon high wooing, and by reason of his eagerness many of them had little rest.

When the ships were boarded and seated against the weather and for war, they summoned them that were to fare in search of the beautiful maiden. None were bidden save whom the king trusted.

Wate rode from Sturmland, till he met with Hetel. His horses went heavily laden with silver and apparel. He brought with him four hundred men. Bold Hetel won many brave guests.

Morunc, the swift knight, rode from Friesland, and brought two hundred warriors. The king was told how that they were come with helmets and harness. Without tarrying came also Irolt; they were all Hetel's kinsmen.

Horant, the bold man, rode from Denmark. Willing envoys, a thousand or more, had Hetel won to send forth. Had he not been so mighty, he had never carried it through.

Irolt of Ortlund had made him ready on such wise that, had the king given him never a stitch, he and his men were so well equipped for setting forth, that they had not needed to ask aught of any man.

The king greeted them, as was meet. Irolt he took

kindly by the hand; then he went to where old Wate sat.

When the valiant knights were to leave the country they were bidden see that they had everything they needed to take with them. The heroes saw for themselves that the vessels were goodly. So on crafty wise Hetel dispatched his envoys for fair Hilda. They had by them on the water two new galleys, strong and staunch, two boats for their baggage, and thereto the best ship that ever sailed the sea from that land.

And now they were eager to be gone. Their horses and equipment were aboard. Wate counselled King Hetel to be of good cheer till they returned, for they were all glad to serve him.

But the king spake sadly: "I commend to your care the youths that go into peril for my sake; for thine own honour teach them daily of thy wisdom."

To which Wate answered, "Whatsoever we do over yonder, fail not thou at home in aught pertaining to honour, and guard the kingdom for us; the youths will have plenty of my counsel."

Bold Frute had charge of the king's treasure-chamber, where lay gold and jewels and many a thing beside. The king gave them all that they desired. If Frute asked for one thing the king granted him thirty.

An hundred men were chosen to lie hid in the vessel, lest it should come to a battle, albeit their intent was to win the maid by cunning. The king gave them of his great treasure gladly. They took all manner of folk with them, knights and squires, equipped as if they were leaving their land for ever.

Hetel said to the heroes, "Now God in heaven go with you."

Horant answered, "Have no fear. When we return

we shall have with us maidens so fair that thou wilt be glad to welcome them."

The king rejoiced to hear it, nevertheless their return was yet far off.

He took leave of them with kisses. His heart was heavy because of the toil they must undergo. He feared for them every hour, for he had not the nature that could find comfort.

By good fortune a north wind blew, that filled the sails as the heroes desired, and their ship glided smoothly from the land. Any that had skill in sea-craft taught the youths.

We know not, and cannot say, where they found night quarters on the sea for six-and-thirty days. All the youths that were with them sware on oath, letter by letter, to stand by them truly.

Albeit they were of their own will on the rough waves, they often suffered annoy; though at other times the sea was smooth. Whoso dwelleth on the water must endure misery.

A thousand miles or more they had sailed across the sea to Hagen's castle at Baljân, where they tell us he held shameful rule. But herein they lie foolishly, for it agreeth not with history.

When the Hegelings drew nigh to the castle they were perceived, and all the folk wondered from what king's land the waves had borne them; for they were clad in goodly raiment.

They anchored their ship straightway, and lowered their sails, and soon the news was told in Hagen's castle that strangers were come thither.

They went down from their ships and carried their goods on shore, that if any needed or desired a thing they could buy it there. They were rich enow, but they spent not their money to win trade. Sixty or

more of the bold men stood like merchants on the strand. Frute of Denmark was the master, and wore better clothes than the rest.

Then because his guests were so rich, the burgo-master of the town of Baljân rode out with his burgesses to visit the false merchants, that bare them as best they could. And when he asked them whence they were come across the sea, Frute answered, "Our land lieth far off. We be merchants, and have rich masters on board."

Wate bade them make a treaty for them with the king. It was easy to see from his high bearing that he was grim to them in his power.

So they brought the guests to Hagen with the story, and he said, "I grant you peace and safety. He that doeth these strange knights any hurt will atone for it on the gallows. Wherefore have no fear. Nothing shall harm you in my land."

Thereupon they gave the king the worth of a thousand marks at least in precious jewels, though he desired not so much as a penny, but only that they would show what they had for sale that was meet for knights and noble women.

Hagen thanked them and said, "Had I but three days to live, I should make good to my guests what they have given me. If they lack for aught, may all men blame me for evermore."

Then the king began to divide what they had brought him. There were bracelets meet for lovely women, and rich embroidered bands; also head-dresses and rings. These the host hastened to give away. His wife and daughter knew that such costly gifts had seldom been brought to his kingdom by merchant folk.

Horant and Wate were the first to send their

offerings to the court. Sixty pieces of the costliest silk anywhere, and forty pieces inwrought with gold were carried on shore; purple stuffs and the silks of Bagdad were poor beside them. They gave also an hundred bales of linen, the best they had, and added rich linings, to the number of forty, to match the silks. If praise be for the buying they must have won it by their gifts. They sent also twelve saddled horses of Castile, and many coats of mail, and cunningly wrought helmets, and twelve shields inlaid with gold. The guests of King Hagen gave freely.

Horant rode to court with his offering, and stark Irolt with him; and Hagen was told that his guests had sent another message. It was easily seen by their gifts that they were kings. Four-and-twenty goodly men were with them, clad in such wise that Hagen's warriors might have thought they were come to be dubbed knights.

One of the courtiers said to the king, "Receive the gifts they bring thee, and leave not the guests unthanked." So he did this, albeit he was rich himself, and said, "I thank you gladly and with cause."

Then they sent for the chamberlains, and bade them examine the things with care; who, when they saw what they were, marvelled greatly.

One of them said, "I tell thee, O King, that there lie here many vessels of gold and silver, adorned with jewels rich and precious. They have given thee, beyond doubt, to the value of twenty thousand marks."

The host answered, "Blessed be my guests! I will share it now with my knights."

Whatsoever they asked, the king gave them. To each he gave according to his desire.

Then he bade both the youths Irolt and Horant sit beside him, and began to inquire of them whence they came. "For never in my life have guests brought me gifts so worthy of praise."

Horant the knight answered, "I will tell thee. We will bewail our evil case to thee, that thou mayest show us mercy. We have been driven from our home. A great king hath vented his wrath on us."

Wild Hagen said, "What is the name of him that hath forced you to flee from your castles and your country? Ye seem to me such goodly men that he had done better, and more wisely, to keep you. He asked the name of him that had banished them, and whose anger had forced them to flee to foreign countries."

Horant the knight answered, "I will tell the truth. He is called Hetel of the Hegeling land, and is powerful and stark and strong of his hand. He hath bereft us of many a high joy; by reason whereof we are the heavier of our cheer."

Said wild Hagen then, "It hath fallen out well for you, for what he hath taken from you shall be made good. So long as I have aught ye shall not have to ask much from the king of the Hegelings." And further he said, "If ye be minded to tarry here, I will share my lands with you and show you such honour as King Hetel hath never done, and give you ten times more than he hath taken from you."

"We would gladly abide with thee," answered Horant of Denmark, "but we fear, yea, hourly I should be in dread, that, if Hetel of the Hegelings found that we were in Ireland, he would never let us live, for he knoweth the way hither."

Hagen said to the two friends, "Agree to tarry, and rest in peace. Hetel would never dare to seek

you in this land with evil intent. That were a shame to myself."

He bade them be lodged in the town, and enjoined his burgesses to show them all the honour they could. The water-weary knights were soon installed at their ease, for the townsfolk did his bidding, and forty or more of the best houses were emptied for the Danes. The burgesses quitted them gladly.

Their costly baggage was carried on shore, while they that lay hid deemed it had been better to fight in battle than to wait till the wooing prospered with fair Hilda.

The king gave orders that his noble guests be asked if they would share his bread and wine, till they had princes' lands of their own.

But Frute of Denmark answered, "That were a shame to us all. Were King Hetel rightly minded towards us, so much silver and gold have we at home that, did we eat nothing else, we could well stay our hunger therewith."

Then Frute bade them set up his booth. Never was such a wonder in the land, that merchant folk should part with their rich goods so cheaply. They might have sold all they had the first day.

They that desired them bought jewels and gold. The king showed favour to his guests with cause. If any wanted goods without paying for them they got them for nothing. One would scarce believe, if he were told, how freely Wate and bold Frute gave of their merchandise. They strove hard to win honour; which reached the ears of the fair women at court. Poor folk were seen clad in their garments, and they that had run in debt, easily won their pledges back.

The young princess got news of them from her chamberlain, and said to the king, "Dear father,

the bold knights come to her chamber, that she might inquire further of them. Which, they tell us, they promised her and granted readily.

The young princess was not sorry, and all the women hastened to adorn themselves with gold and apparel; they were eager to see how the strange knights would demean them.

When now old Hilda sat by her daughter, the lovely maidens took care that naught should be seen in them which any could call unworthy of a king's child.

Then old Wate was bidden to go to the princess. Despite his grey hairs she had some childish fears of him; yet on courteous wise she went towards him, and received him the first of all, albeit she was maybe loath to kiss him. His beard was broad and his hair interwoven with richly embroidered bands. She bade both Wate and Frute sit down. Before her chair stood the noble men versed in courtesy, and that had done many a brave deed boldly in battle. The heroes won honour thereby, and praise was their reward.

Queen Hilda and her daughter asked Wate in jest whether he had liefer sit beside fair women, or fight in grim battle, and he answered, "The last is more to my mind. However oft I have sat by fair women, one thing I have still held better, and that was to fight, when the hour was come, with good warriors in fierce battle."

At this the lovely maiden laughed aloud. She saw well that it irked him to be with women, whereat there was more jesting in the hall.

Then Queen Hilda and her daughter spake with Morunc's men. She asked concerning the old man, "What is his name? Hath he anywhere folk, castles and land? Hath he wife or child in his castle? I ween in his home they are little caressed."

with gold. Where knights were needed, their prowess was proven.

The king's men wore their shields and their clubs and their bucklers at court, and there was jousting in plenty: fighting with the javelin and shooting at goodly shields. The young heroes were undismayed.

Then Hagen asked Wate and his men if, in their land, they had ever seen such fierce tilting as his knights practised in Ireland: whereat Wate smiled scornfully.

"I have never seen the like," he said, "Would any teach it me, I would gladly stay here a full year, till I had rightly learned it. To the master that would instruct me therein I would not grudge reward."

Said the king to his guest, "For the friendship I bear thee, I will bid my skilfullest master teach thee, that thou mayest learn three strokes to deal when there is fighting in fierce battle. Thou mayest perchance profit thereby later."

So the master came and began to teach bold Wate, and soon fell in fear for his life, for Wate stood on his defence as he had been a fighter by trade; whereat Frute of Denmark laughed. It was well for the teacher that he sprang aside like a wild leopard. In Wate's hand the good sword rang loud without pause, that sparks of fire were struck from the shields. The master had to thank his pupil for this.

Then said wild Hagen, "Give me the sword, I would have some sport with him of Sturmland, and see if I can teach him my four strokes, that he may thank me."

Old Wate was not slow to approve, and said to the king, "I must have thy promise, Prince Hagen, that thou wilt do me no hurt. Didst thou hew me with wounds, I should be shamed before women."

Now Wate could defend himself as none in this world would believe.

The artless man smote Hagen heavily, that he began to smoke like a watered firebrand, albeit he was the master and the other the scholar; stark enow was Wate. The host also drave at his guest with mighty blows.

The folk looked on, rejoicing at the strength of both men. The king soon discovered Wate's mastery, and would have been wroth, had he not lost honour thereby. Yet, though they were both strong, Hagen proved him the stronger.

Then said Wate to the king, "Let us fight, as thou hadst not promised to spare me. I have now learned thy four strokes well, and would fain thank thee."

Such thanks might he have gotten from a wild Saxon or a Frank.

When it was a fair fight the hall began to shake with their blows. In any other undertaking they must have prospered. So fierce was the combat that their swords sprang loose from the hilts.

Then they went and sat down, and the host said to the guest: "Didst thou tell me thou wert fain to learn? Certes, I never saw the man whose scholar I had liefer be, to learn such skill. Wheresoever such sports are practised thou must win praise in the lists."

Irolt said to the king, "This was done that ye might measure your strengths. We have often seen the like in our master's land. Both knights and squires practise thus daily."

Cried Hagen, "Had I known that, no sword had come in my hand. I have never seen a scholar learn so fast." Whereat many a mother's son laughed.

The king allowed his guests to drive what sports they would, which they of Ortland did gladly. When the time hung heavy, they would put the stone and shoot with the javelin.

SIXTH ADVENTURE

HOW HORANT SANG SWEETLY

GOOD fortune befell them one night, for the bold knight of Denmark sang with so sweet a voice that he pleased all the folk. The birds stopped their singing, and the king and all his men listened with delight, that the Dane won many a friend thereby.

The old queen heard it too, for the melody rang through the window where she sat on the rampart.

Said fair Hilda then, "What did I hear? The sweetest song that ever I heard in this world hath reached mine ears. Would to God in heaven my chamberlain could do the like."

She bade them fetch the knight that had sung so sweetly, and thanked him warmly when he appeared, because her evening had sped with joy. The warrior was well received by Hilda's women.

The queen said, "We would hear the song that reached us erstwhile. I would deem it a favour to hearken to thy singing every night. Thou shalt be well rewarded."

"If thou desire it, queen, and thank me, I will at any time sing so good a song that whoso heareth its sweetness aright shall forget his sorrow and his care."

He said he would gladly serve her, and took his leave. He won more by his song in Ireland than he

had ever done at home. So the knight of Denmark worked well for Hetel.

When the night was over and it was dawn, Horant began to sing, that the birds in the hedges kept silence to listen to his sweet notes, and the folk that were asleep lay not long abed.

His song rang out clear, ever higher and better. Hagen himself, who was sitting by his wife, heard it, and they must needs go forth from their room on to the rampart. And fortune favoured the guest, for the young princess heard it also; wild Hagen's daughter and her maidens sat and listened, whilst the birds round about the palace forgot their song. The knights, too, marked how sweetly he of Denmark sang, and he was thanked by women and men alike.

But Frute of Denmark said, "My nephew would do well to stop these stupid notes. I hear him singing. For whom is this foolish morning psalm?"

To which Hagen's knights answered, "Tell us now, is there any man alive so sick that he would not hear with delight the voice that goeth out of his mouth?"

"Would to God in heaven," said the king, "that I could do the like myself."

When he had sung three songs to the end, none thought it long. Had he sung while one may ride a thousand miles, it had seemed to them no more than a moment wherein one may turn his hand.

That morning, after he had finished and risen from his seat, the young princess was merrier of her cheer than ever before, when they were clothing her in her bright raiment, and she sent for Hagen her father.

The king went to her pondering, and she caressed his chin with her hand, and begged him sweetly, saying, "Bid him sing us more songs here at court."

To which he answered, "Dear daughter, I would

give him a thousand pounds to sing to thee every night, but my noble guests are so proud that maybe we shall hear his songs no more."

With this the king left her for all she could say. But Horant ceased not to sing his best, nor had ever sung on such knightly wise before. Both sick and whole could think on nothing else. The beasts in the wood left off feeding, the worms in the grass, and the fishes that swim in the water, lay still to listen. Certes, Horant made good use of his skill. None wearied of his songs, or heeded the singing of the priests in the church. The bells rang less sweetly than they were wont. All that heard Horant yearned towards him.

The beautiful maiden sent for him secretly, that her father might not know, nor her mother be told, that she had him in her room by stealth. A wily chamberlain won her meed of red gold, twelve heavy armlets bright and precious, that the master-singer might come to her quarters by night.

He contrived it privily. Certes, the man rejoiced that he had won such favour at court. For he was come from far lands to win her, and because of his skill she looked on him kindly.

She bade her chamberlain stand before the house, that none might go in after Horant, till she had heard his song to the end. No man was there save him and young Morunc.

Then she bade the knights sit down, and said, "Sing to me again what I have already heard. I am fain to hear it, for no delight or pastime can compare with thy voice."

"Durst I sing to thee, young princess, without thy father Hagen taking my head off, and wert thou nigh to my master's land I would proudly serve thee in all things."

He began the song of Amalie, that Christian man hath never learned before or since, except he hath heard it on unknown seas. Horant the bold and courtly knight did good service therewith.

When he had ended the sweet song, the fair damsel said, "I thank thee, friend"; and gave him a bracelet from her arm; no other gold had been so precious. "I reward thee gladly, and bear thee good will for this." She promised besides, and gave him her hand on it, that if ever she wore a crown and ruled a land, none should drive him farther than to her castle, where he might abide with honour.

Of all that she offered him he took only a girdle. "Lest it be said of me that I asked too much," he told her. "I will bear this to my master, who will rejoice at my news."

She questioned him, "Who is thy master, and what is his name? Hath he a crown and country of his own? Of a truth I am well inclined to him for love of thee."

The bold Dane answered, "I never saw so mighty a king; and did none betray us, princess, I would fain tell thee how our master took leave of us, when he sent us hither to thy father's castle and country."

She said, "Let me hear the king's message, and I will tell thee, or we part, whether it seemeth good to me."

Horant feared Hagen, and it began to irk him there at court. So he said to the damsel, "He bade us tell thee that he loved thee from a heart void of hate. Lady, grant him thy favour; he hath turned from all other women for thy sake."

She answered, "God reward him that he inclineth toward me. Were he of equal birth, I would wed him, wouldst thou but sing to me night and morning."

"Have no fear," said he, "I will do it gladly." And further he said, "My master, noble maiden, hath

always at his court twelve men that sing far better than I. Yet, albeit, their songs are sweet, my master singeth the best of all."

She answered, "Since thy master is so skilled, I will always desire to reward him that he hath sought my love. If I durst defy my father, I would willingly follow thee hence."

Then said Morunc, "Princess, we have at hand seven hundred knights, that gladly share both our good and evil fortune. Wert thou once on the water, thou needest have no fear that we would ever give thee up to wild Hagen. We are eager to be gone. Entreat of Hagen that he allow thy mother and thee to go down to look at our ships."

"Right willing am I, if my father will permit it. Demand of the king and his men that I ride down to the beach with my maidens. If my father give his word, tell me three days afore the time."

The chief chamberlain had the right to go in often to the princess, and that good knight entered to talk with the women, and found the two warriors there. They had cause to tremble for their lives.

He asked Hilda, "Who are they that sit here?" The bold warriors were never in worse case. To them he said, "Who bade you to this room? He that did it hath counselled you ill."

"Be not wroth," said Hilda. "No hurt need befall them. If thou wouldst not suffer from mine anger for ever, bring them secretly to their chamber. Else would he profit little from his knightly singing."

"Is it he that singeth so well? I know one of the same sort, than whom king never won better warrior (my father and his mother were the children of one father), for he was a good and valiant hero."

"What was his name?" the maiden asked.

"He was called Horant, and was from Denmark. Albeit he wore no crown, he deserved one. Now we are strangers, but once we lived merrily together by Hetel."

When Morunc knew him that they had banished from his land at home, he was moved, and his eyes brimmed over for sorrow, whereupon the princess regarded the knight kindly.

The chamberlain also saw the hero's eyes wet, and cried, "Dear princess, they are my kinsmen. I tell thee true. Help them to escape, and I will be their guard."

The hearts of the knights were stirred. "If my mistress allowed it, I would fain kiss them on their mouths. It is long since I had news of King Hetel of the Hegelings."

"If these guests be thy kinsmen," said the damsel then, "I will hold them the dearer. Thou must tell the king who they are, that they may not sail so soon across the waters."

Then the two good knights went aside to confer in secret, and Morunc told the chamberlain his purpose, how they were come into the land after Hilda, and how King Hetel had sent them to woo her.

The chamberlain said, "I am troubled on both sides—on the one hand concerning the king's honour, and, on the other, how to save you from death through his wrath. Were he aware that ye desire the maiden, ye would never win hence alive."

Horant answered, "Mark my words. On the fourth day from now we will ask leave to quit the country, whereupon the king will press on us gifts of treasure and apparel. But we will accept nothing, save that Hagen, of his courtesy, agree to ride down to see our ship—he and his wife, the queen. Thou must

help me to compass this. If we prosper therein our trouble will vanish, and our labours be ended. If the noble maiden ride to the shore, we shall be well rewarded for it at home by King Hetel."

Thereupon the crafty chamberlain brought them from the house without the king's knowledge, till they were safe and nigh to their lodging. Such true service was not to be scorned there at court.

They told Wate in secret that the high-born maiden would gladly wed Hetel of the Hegelings, and took counsel with the knight how they should convey her home.

"Came she without the door, and saw I her there but once," said old Wate, "however fierce the strife with them of the castle, the young princess would enter her father's dwelling no more."

This weighty matter was kept hidden. They prepared in secret for their return, and told it also to the knights that lay in the ship, and that were not loath to hear it, for they had long been weary of waiting. They called all their men together, and a whispering began among them that not a few in Ireland were to bewail sore. The Hegelings strove hard for honour, and heeded not the hurt to Hagen.

On the fourth morning they rode to court in new vesture cut to heart's desire. They were eager to be gone, and asked leave to depart from the king and all his men.

Said Hagen to the guests, "Wherefore quit ye my land? I have given all my thought to it, how to make you love my country and my kingdom; and now ye would away and leave me on unfriendly wise."

Old Wate answered, "The prince of the Hegelings hath sent for us. Naught will serve him but that we make our peace with him. We are likewise greatly

longed for by them that we left at home. Wherefore we would fain speed the faster."

But wild Hagen said, "It grieveth me to let you go. Take now, for my sake, of my horses and raiment, of my gold and precious stones. I would make good to you your costly gifts, that the folk blame me not."

But old Wate answered, "I am too rich to bear any of your gold hence with me. Mighty Hetel, whose favour our kinsmen have won for us, would never pardon us the shame. But there is one thing, O King, that we desire of thee (and would deem it an honour didst thou grant it): that thou wouldst see for thyself the provision we have with us. Of food fit for the best we have sufficient for three years to come. This we will give to whoever will take it, seeing we must away. God guard both thee and thine honour. In good sooth we must forth, and may not tarry longer. Grant us then this high escort to our ships: let thy beautiful daughter and the queen, thy wife, see our goods. We were honoured thereby for evermore. If thou show us this grace, most noble King Hagen, we will ask of thee no other gift."

The host answered his guests courteously, saying, "Since ye will not be turned, I will bid them saddle to-morrow early an hundred horses for maids and women. I myself will also go with them, and gladly examine thy ships."

They took their leave then for that night, and rode down to the sea, where they brought ashore good wine that lay in their boats, and many meats thereto, that their ships were lightened. Frute of Denmark was wise.

SEVENTH ADVENTURE

HOW THE MAIDENS WENT TO LOOK AT THE SHIP, AND
HOW THEY WERE CARRIED OFF

THE next morning after early Mass the maidens and the women that Hagen was to take with him to the beach vied with one another in their dress. With these rode at the least a thousand good Irish knights.

The guests had heard Mass sung at Baljân. The king knew not that any hurt would befall him, but the leave-taking of the strangers brought him little honour, for through them he lost his noble daughter.

When they were come to the ships, they lifted Queen Hilda and her attendants on to the sand, and the fair women went to the ships. The booths stood open, and the queen beheld wonders. King Hagen himself saw many a rich jewel of great worth that lay on the stalls, and after he and his followers had looked thereon, the Hegelings showed them to the maidens, and bade them take of their goodly bracelets.

The king was gone off on a boat to examine yet further, and, or they had opened all the doors of the treasure-room, Wate's anchors were weighed, and they hastened off with the women as fast as they could.

Wate heeded no man's anger, nor cared he what befell the precious things on the stalls. They parted

the old queen from the maiden, and the men that lay hid sprang up.

Grimly wroth was King Hagen. The folk saw them hoisting the sails, and many that they threw overboard were wet, and swam like birds in the water close to the shore. The old queen wailed bitterly for her dear daughter.

When wild Hagen saw the armed men, how grimly he spake in his wrath! "Hither with my spear on the instant. They that I come at with my hands shall surely die."

But Morunc answered gaily, "Be not so hasty. Howsoever swiftly thou follow after us to fight, and even dost thou bring with thee a thousand warriors, we will throw them all into the sea, and give them a wave-cool dwelling."

But bold Hagen's men would not be stayed. The water by the shore began to glitter with the fighting. Swords were drawn and javelins hurled. Then the Hegelings took to their oars, and the ships flew from the land.

Bold Wate sprang from the beach into a galley, that his harness resounded, and hastened after Hilda with fifty of his men. But the proud burgesses were eager for revenge; and Hagen came up bearing a sharp and heavy sword. Old Wate had tarried too long behind the others, and Hagen, grim and with uplifted javelin, cried with a loud voice to his men, bidding them make haste, and allowing them no rest, that they might overtake the Hegelings who had done him this wrong. He had fain killed and caught them all.

But albeit he soon won to him a great host, he could not follow his foes across the wild sea, for his vessels were leaky and unfit for the voyage. And

when they told wild Hagen how ill the matter stood, he and his men on the shore could do naught but bid the workfolk build new ships for the sea. All that were able came to his help, and he won, thereto, many a gallant and good knight.

They left Ireland on the seventh morning. They that King Hetel had sent after Hilda were not more than a thousand strong, whereas wild Hagen set out with three thousand men.

The bold Danes had sent forward a message to Hetel with the news that they brought with them Hagen's daughter on such wise that he need not be ashamed, but, albeit they knew it not, they had more work afore them.

King Hetel cried joyfully, "Now is my sorrow gone far from me, and I am glad because of the toil of my heroes in Hagen's land! I have not ceased to mourn for them that left my home. If thou deceive me not, my good envoy, and dost not lie in saying thou hast seen the maiden with my kinsmen in this land, I will pay thee well for the news."

"It is the truth; I have seen the maiden. She said they feared greatly, although they were many a mile from her home. 'I am in dread,' she said, 'lest my father give chase with his ships.'"

So the king bade them pay the envoy to the value of a hundred marks, and helmets, swords and good shields were brought to the knights that stood by, for they were eager to ride toward her that came from Hagen's dwelling.

He took with him all that he could, for he hoped to lead his warriors forth with such pomp that no king's daughter might ever have had so fair a welcome afore. But though his men made all haste, it was long till he won the folk he had need of, which irked him

sore. Yet in the end he brought a thousand of his friends to welcome Hilda.

Gaily clad in bright armour, both rich and poor rode forth to lead the maiden home, as was meet. The proud knights were eager for the journey. A great din arose when they left the castle, and a multitude of folk lined the way high and low, as they passed along.

Then Hetel spurred forward to behold his beautiful princess.

Old Wate, the knight of Sturmland, had landed on the march at Waleis, and the water-weary knights, who had leapt ashore, had begun to prepare a lodging for Hilda on friendly soil, and had ordered tents to be pitched by the sea for old Wate's men. Certes, it was a merry life.

Thereupon fresh tidings reached them, that Hetel of the Hegelings was come with his knights, and was riding towards his dear one. The fair maiden thought only on the honour and observance wherewith they welcomed her to her new home, and looked not for any more fighting. They had all they needed, bread and wine, and the folk of that country, who were to escort them on their way, gave them all they could, and let them lack for nothing they desired.

Then Hetel came swiftly towards them with the friends he had summoned to him in his father's kingdom, and so gaily they all rode in bright harness that the travellers rejoiced to see them. The Hegelings coursed on the plain and tilted with knightly prowess, to the delight of the youths, and Frute of Denmark and wise Wate rode forward.

Hetel saw them from afar, and his heart was uplifted; he bounded with pleasure when he saw the twain—best of the noble envoys he had sent to

Ireland after wild Hagen's daughter; and they, on their side, rejoiced to see the valiant hero. Every hour brought them new delight. Wate and his comrades had endured much toil in strange lands, for the which King Hetel now repaid them.

With a laughing heart he said to his kinsmen, "My dear envoys, I have suffered great heaviness for your sake, fearing that all my men lay in bonds in Hagen's castle."

He kissed lovingly both the men grey with age. It was such a feast for the king's eyes as they had seldom found; yea, I ween it was long since such joy had befallen him.

"No hurt hath come nigh us," said old Wate, "albeit I never heard tell of such power as Hagen wieldeth in his land. His people are proud, and he himself is a valiant knight. It was a blessed hour when he who counselled thee thought thereon, for of a truth we have brought thee the fairest woman that ever mine eyes beheld. So soon as may be (for the foemen are bold) we must spy all round, that Hagen overtake us not on this march. We might come in scathe by his overweening pride."

Then Wate and Frute led King Hetel's bold liegemen where they were to see fair Hilda that day. Many a man that was there had his helmet hewn above his bright shield or long.

The Hegelings that had tarried in their own land by the king were now gotten from their horses on to the grass, and gay was the gallant company. The noble maiden wore a beautiful hat. Irolt of Ortlund and Morunc of Friesland led fair Hilda by the hand, one on each side of her, as she approached the king. High praise was her due.

She advanced to great Hetel, and twenty maidens

or more with her, all clad in white linen and the best silk, which pleased them well. And the valiant man greeted the maiden sweetly that afterward wore the crown by him, and embraced her beautiful body and kissed her right lovingly.

He also welcomed each of her damsels, among whom was a maiden called Hildeburg, of a royal house and of kingly kin—one of them had dwelled long by the griffin, and that Hagen's wife had reared in virtue and honour. She was born in Portugal, and had seen so many strange folk that she yearned toward her own kin.

But albeit Hetel greeted the women courteously, their pain was not yet turned to joy, for on the morrow at dawn of day, when they thought their trouble was over, they came in great peril.

The noble escort was bidden welcome and sat down by Hagen's child on the bright flowers under tents of goodly silk; but even now Hagen was at hand, by whom they suffered much dole.

EIGHTH ADVENTURE

HOW HAGEN PURSUED HIS DAUGHTER

WHEN the dawn broke, bold Horant of Denmark saw a cross that he knew well on a sail whereon figures were wrought. Old Wate had little love for such pilgrims.

Loud cried Morunc to Irolt then: "Ask King Hetel what he would do, for I have spied Hagen's arms on a rich sail. We have slept too long, and, certes, are little likely to part from him as friends."

They told Hetel that his father-in-law had brought many ships and galleys from Ireland to the beach, whereupon Wate and Frute held counsel with the king. The Danes had scarce believed it, had they not seen with their eyes the knights of Hagen, that gave chase to royal Hilda on the shore at Waleis, where the men of Ortland still lay at their ease on the strand.

"If it be my father," said fair Hilda, when she heard it, "more beautiful women than any would trow will mourn the work of his hand."

But Knight Irolt answered, "We will hinder that. When the rage of battle is upon him, I would not, for a mountain of gold, miss the sight of my uncle Wate by wild Hagen in the onset."

The high-born maidens wept and wailed; the ships rose and fell, for it was a west wind that had brought the host of warriors to the march of Waleis, where

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on the grim battle-field the Danes gave them a bloody dwelling.

Wate bade Hilda stay on a boat, and swift on all sides of the ship the maiden was encircled with shields; an hundred knights or more stood guard round the women.

Then all on the beach made ready for the strife: they that were come to welcome Hilda, and they that had carried her off from Ireland, to the hurt of the king. Many a strong man was come nigh to his life's end.

Loud cried Hetel to his warriors, "Now stand on your defence, brave knights. To him that never won gold before, I will give it in full measure and unweighed. Forget not that ye face the Irish as foemen."

They sprang ashore in their battle harness, and the whole land of Waleis was straightway filled with the fighting of heroes. Foes and friends pressed to one point.

Now had Hagen also won to them on the beach, and the spears flew thick from the hands of good knights. They on land defended them well from the men of Ireland, that the more were wounded. Seldom hath a man given his child to one that paid him for it with a fiery wind struck from hard helmets, before the eyes of fair women! Hilda rued the journey with the strangers. They stood there behind their shields under the flying javelins, striving to smite each other deep wounds through the goodly hauberks. The water was all red with their life's blood.

Hagen called to his friends, that the sea resounded—for his strength was great—to help him to win to the land with deep wounds, and since they did it gladly, weapons were proven in the battle.

Hagen had pressed close to the shore, and the

weapons rang loud. He found Hetel standing the highest to the water, where his strength had done wonders, so, grimly wroth, he sprang into the waves, and raged towards the beach.

Arrows fell like snow-flakes on the hero, shot by the Hegelings. Loud also was the din of swords; but many of them that would have slain him had to give way before his blows.

When royal Hetel won to his father-in-law, fair Hilda wept bitterly. It is a great wonder, since we know from books how stark Hagen was, that the King of the Hegelings ever withstood him. When they ran at each other good helmets were heard resounding, and it was long or the encounter ended.

Bold Hetel was wounded by Hagen, whereupon his kinsmen, with Wate of Sturm-land, came to his help. Irolt and Morunc were good warriors and stout of their arm. Frute and Wate, with his host of a thousand good men, pressed towards him. The kinsmen of Hetel of the Hegelings smote many with wounds: they strewed them on both sides.

Hagen's followers had now forced their way to the shore, and fought with the Hegelings there. Many a helmet was cloven, for they strove grimly for the women.

When Hagen spied young Hetel nigh him, both the Danes and the Hegelings wounded many: Then they called to old Wate to make his way to wild Hagen.

Stark Hagen brake through the host, for his sword cut deep, and gladly he avenged the rape of the beautiful maidens. Knights in their harness lay thick around him, for he was grimly wroth. His sword sufficed not for his hate. Many noble warriors fell before his spear, that never told in their homes how it went with them in the battle.

But Wate, the good knight, tarried not when, dripping from swords, he saw his good kinsmen's blood flowing from their bright harness. Five hundred that would have helped him lay dead.

They were all met, both the knights of that land and the strangers, and a great din arose.

Wate and Hagen ran at each other, and he was fortunate that won clear of them. The king fell on Wate with great blows, for he was strong. The knights saw fire smitten from the helmets like flaming brands, for both hewed with a mighty arm. Old Wate dealt a stroke so heavy that the island trembled. The women were not easily saved.

Then King Hetel, whose wound was now bandaged, began to ask where Wate his kinsman was. He found him by him that was called the Devil-king, and whom the knight of Sturmland so withstood, that the tale might be told of both brave Wate and Hagen in battle.

The pole which Hagen carried he split on Wate's shield. Never knight in any land fought better; but Wate would not yield. Whereupon Hagen smote Hetel's man through the head, that the blood of the wound gushed from the helmet.

The wind blew cold, for it drew towards evening, and on all sides the battle raged.

Grimly Wate avenged the deadly stroke that had covered him with bloody drops. He struck Hagen, that his sword shone in the fire smitten from the steel rim of his helmet, and the day grew dark before his eyes.

Irolt, the hero of Ortland, was wounded also, albeit so many dead lay strewn by his hand that he could not part Wate and Hagen.

The women wept bitterly when they heard so loud

a din of swords, and fair Hilda cried dolefully to Hetel to save her father from the peril wherein he stood by reason of Wate, the age-hoary man.

Whereupon Hetel bade his standard-bearers lead his folk into the fray, and fought valiantly. He hewed his way to Wate, that gave him no thanks.

Then he cried aloud to Hagen, "For thine own honour let this hate be ended, that no more of our friends be slain."

With a loud voice Hagen asked—his mood was grim—for whose sake he should cease from fighting.

Whereupon the hero answered, "I am Hetel of the Hegeling land, that sent my men far for the Princess Hilda."

The proud man answered, "I know that thou hast wooed her boldly, and hast gained honour thereby among heroes. With fair devices thou hast won my dear daughter."

Then Hetel sprang forward to part the fray, as many a man doeth still, and albeit Wate was right grim of his mood, they ceased from strife, and Hagen fell back with all his men.

Prince Hetel did off his helmet, and a truce was proclaimed over all, to which Hilda's father agreed. It was long since the women had heard such good news. All they that had been fighting did off their armour, some to rest, and some because of the deep wounds they had brought from the battle. But many were there for whom peril and strife were ended.

Then Hetel went up to wild Hagen and said, "Since I grudge no honour to Hilda, thy daughter, thou shouldst gladly let her wear the crown by me, for she hath won many valiant knights to her service."

Hetel sent a messenger to bid Wate thither, for they had heard long afore how he learned the art of

healing from a wild woman, and the skilful man eased many a body of its pain.

When he had done off his armour and bound his own wounds, he carried a root full of virtue in his hand, and a little pot that held plaster.

Thereupon Hilda, the beautiful princess, fell at his feet, and said, "Wate, dear friend, save my father, and help his knights that lie there in the dust, and I will never gainsay thee in aught. Show thy skill on them that stood by him; and forget not Hetel's kinsmen of the Hegeling land, for they have wet the sand with their blood, as it were rain. Sad evermore must be the tale that I tell of this journey."

"I will heal none," answered old Wate—"in good earnest I say thee nay—till great Hagen hath made peace with Hetel, my lord; till then it is meet that I hold my hand."

"Durst I but go to him!" the noble maiden said. "Alack, I have done ill by my father, since I dare not go to him that is my nearest of kin! He and his men would scorn my greeting, I fear."

They inquired then of Hagen: "Wilt thou grant it? If it irk thee not, thy beautiful daughter, the young princess, would fain behold thee. Wert thou willing, she would bring help to thy wounds."

"I will see her gladly, despite what she hath done. Her visit will rejoice me. Why should I refuse her greeting here in a strange land? King Hetel may haply make good to both me and my daughter the hurt he hath done us."

So Horant of Denmark and Frute the knight led her by the hand to where the king was. She went with only one maiden to look on her father's wounds. Notwithstanding all Hetel could give her, she sorrowed for her friends.

When Hagen saw her and Hildeburg coming, he sprang from his seat and cried, "Welcome, noble Hilda, my daughter. Despite what hath passed, I greet thee gladly."

But he would not let the maidens see his wounds. He made them stand back when they were bound; and Wate made haste to heal the king, that the damsel might weep no more.

When Hagen had received his medicine of root and herb, he had ease from his bitter hurt, and as soon as Wate had spread the plaster on his wounds, his daughter went to him again and found her father cured.

The master-healer had little rest. Had he worked for wealth on the field of battle, camels could not have borne it from the place. None ever heard tell of such skill. Hetel of the Hegeling land he healed straightway, and, after him, all the others. Any that skill could help he cured and saved from death.

They would not let the maidens tarry longer there, and Hagen said to Hilda, "Let us go elsewhere, till they have cleared the field of the slain that have not waited to fulfil their days."

Then Hetel invited Hagen to his land, but he was slow to promise, till he was well assured that he of the Hegelings ruled a mighty kingdom. After that, he journeyed thither with his dear daughter well content.

The young heroes departed singing; but of poor and rich they left behind them full three hundred dead, that lay dolefully, hewn with sharp swords.

The war-weary knights returned to their land on such wise that they found the folk there joyful; albeit the kin of them that lay slain were not glad, but sorrowed sore.

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So it came to pass that Hilda journeyed home with Hetel, while many orphans wept. Yet afterwards it went well with them in that land. Hilda was crowned by the great king, which was an honour to the Hegelings.

Hetel had won his heart's desire. Old and young wore their swords at the court, and likewise the guests of the mighty prince. Well might Queen Hilda's wedding please her father.

How royally the noble maiden sat on the bridal high-seat! Yea, they tell us that on that day five hundred were dubbed good knights. Wise Frute of Denmark was the chamberlain. Hagen saw wealth enow there. Hetel's friends had told him in Ireland that their master was overlord of seven great lands. All the poor were sent home rejoicing.

King Hetel gave to the men of Ireland silver and apparel, horses and red gold, more than they could carry away with them. He won them to his friends, that Queen Hilda had much honour.

On the twelfth morning they quitted the country. Danish horses with manes hanging down to the hoofs were led to the shore. The guests were not sorry that they were become acquainted with Hetel.

High stewards and marshals rode with Hagen, cup-bearers and chamberlains; however many of these he had before, he had never been so well served at his own cost.

Wild Hagen was right glad that Hilda wore the crown there.

They ate and camped by the way. Hagen and his knights were so well seen to that they could tell at home how Hetel's friends had shown them all observance.

Then Hagen embraced Hildeburg and said, "Keep

watch over Hilda with thy faithful heart. So large a household hath its troubles for women. Do well by her, that thy virtue be seen therein."

"That will I, O King. Thou hast often heard how I endured many hardships beside her mother, and never ceased to be her friend. Many a mile I followed her, or she chose thee for lover."

He summoned the other damsels to come before him also, and these could not refrain from weeping. Then he led them all by the hand, and commended them to the host saying, "Entreat them kindly, for the beautiful children are strangers here."

To his daughter he said, "So wear thy crown that thy mother and I may hear it said of thee, that none hates thee. Thy wealth is so great, that if any blamed thee, thy name were indeed dishonoured." Hagen kissed Hilda, bowed to the king, and took ship for Baljân. He and his knights never beheld the land of the Hegelings again, for they dwelled too far away.

When he sat at home by her mother, the old queen, he said that he could not have bestowed his daughter better, and that, had he more, he would send them also to the Hegelings.

Whereupon Hilda praised almighty Christ, and said, "I rejoice, heart and soul, that it hath prospered so well with my daughter. How standeth it with her damsels, and with the good Princess Hildeburg?"

"They are content both with the people and the land," Hagen answered. "Our daughter's maidens never wore such good apparel here. We must let them bide where they be. Many a coat of mail was hewn for their sake."

NINTH ADVENTURE

HOW WATE, MORUNC AND HORANT JOURNEYED HOME

Now turn from this tale, and I will tell you how, in Hetel's kingdom, his kinsmen had to pay fee for castles and land. They all came to court when Hetel and Hilda summoned them.

Wate rode home to Sturmland, and Morunc to Nifland, while Horant of Denmark brought his knights to Givers on the coast, where they owned him for their lord; there they guarded their castle, and the name of their ruler was widely known. Irolt reigned with power in Ortland, and was the lord of that land; wherefore he could the better serve Hetel near and far. So valiant was the king, that none hath ever heard tell of so good a monarch.

When Hetel found beautiful and high-born maidens in his land, he was fain to add to the glory of his court by making them of his household, and they were all willing to serve wild Hagen's child.

The king lived happily with his wife, and so great was their love that people knew he would have lost the whole world for her sake. Nor had any of his kinsmen ever seen a fairer woman.

In the next seven years Hetel was thrice at war. They that by day and night plotted against his honour on all occasion, did it to their hurt. He strengthened his castles, and gave his land peace,

as a king ought. With his hand he did valiantly, that it was told of him in strange countries how he was ever undaunted. His name was without stain. Great was King Hetel's renown. Wise Wate visited his lord three times a year without fail, and served him faithfully and truly, near and far. Horant of Denmark, also, rode often to court, and brought jewels and apparel, gold and silks, to the palace. He brought from Denmark all that women are wont to wear, and gave it to whosoever desired it. From all the service that his vassals rendered him, King Hetel won much honour, more than any other knight; and through Hilda, likewise, who was a high and mighty queen.

Hilda, Hagen's daughter, bare two children to King Hetel, that were well reared. The news spread over all that heirs were not lacking to inherit his lands and castles. The one was a knight named Ortwin, and was given in charge to old Wate, who trained the child, that his desires were fixed on high things. These were taught him from his youth up, and he grew to be a valiant hero. The beautiful daughter was called Gudrun the fair, and her they sent to be reared by her closest of kin in Denmark, who were not loath to serve Hetel wherein they could.

The damsel was now full grown, and so beautiful of her body that men and women alike praised her, for the report spread far beyond her own land. She was called Gudrun, and was brought up in Denmark, and grew on such wise that, had she been a man, she might well have been dubbed a knight.

Great princes sought her love, and not a few of them did it to their hurt. Albeit Hilda, Hetel's wife, was fair, Gudrun was fairer still, and fairer, too, than her grandmother, Hilda of Ireland. She was exalted daily before all other women.

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Hetel denied her to a king that dwelled in Alzabè, who was heavy of his cheer when he heard it, for he deemed himself so great that none could compare with him in might. He was Siegfried from the land of the Moors, and was known afar for his strength. He was overlord of seven kings, and desired Hilda's daughter because all men praised her.

He and his comrades from Ikaria often won renown in the sight of the women when they tilted nigh to Hetel's castle. When Hilda and her daughter went out from their chambers, they would often hear a din before the castle of Waleis, where the Moors rode with knightly skill in their presence, that shields and spears rang loud.

A better warrior could not be, and she disliked him not, albeit he was dark-favoured. He would gladly have won her, yet none gave her to him to wife. Wherefore he was grieved beyond measure, and very wroth to lose her, after he had ridden so far, and he threatened to burn all Hetel's kingdom. The Moors were heavy-hearted. Hetel, in his pride, denied him his child, and friendly service was over between them. Siegfried said that if the hour ever came, he would not fail to do Hetel a hurt.

So they quitted the Hegeling land, and by reason thereof, long after, a noble knight suffered sore; for they did their utmost against Herwig.

TENTH ADVENTURE

HOW HARTMUT WOODED GUDRUN

THE report spread into Normandy that none was fairer than Hilda's daughter Gudrun, the high-born maiden. The king there was called Hartmut, and he desired her greatly.

His mother Gerlint counselled him thereto, and the young prince followed her teaching.

His father was called Ludwig, of the land of Normandy, and when they were agreed on this, they sent for the old king, and he rode to Hartmut, who hid not what he had in his mind. But when Ludwig heard young Hartmut's news he deemed it would bring them sorrow, albeit the good knight approved what he heard.

"Who hath told thee that she is so beautiful?" he asked. "Though she were queen of all the lands of the earth, she bides too far from us, that we should seek to win her. Many an envoy might be lost for her sake."

"It shall not be too far," said Hartmut. "When a king wooeth wife and wealth once for all, it endureth till his life's end. Yield to me in this: I would have envoys sent to her."

Then spake old Gerlint of Normandy, "Bid letters be written. To the envoys that bear such a message

I will gladly give raiment and treasure. Let them learn the way to the Princess Gudrun."

But Ludwig said, "Dost thou know how her mother Hilda came from Ireland, or what befell good knights on the journey? They are a proud folk, and Gudrun's kinsmen, I ween, will scorn us."

Cried Hartmut, "Had I to lead a mighty army by land and sea to win her, I would do it gladly. I will not rest till I have Hilda's daughter to my wife."

"Then I will help thee," said Ludwig the knight, "and be content with this that I shall do: I will send thither twelve sumpters laden with my silver, that haply the thing may fall out the more to our honour."

Hartmut chose sixty from among his men to send for the maiden, and these were well supplied with apparel and food, and were given a good escort, for old Ludwig was wise. When they had all that they needed, bold Hartmut and Queen Gerlint went to them with sealed letters, and speeded the goodly band out of the country.

They rode in haste, night and day, till they came where they found them to whom they carried the message from Normandy. Hartmut was both glad and sorry. They journeyed and toiled by land and water for at least an hundred days, or they discovered in what quarter the kingdom of the Hegelings lay. Their horses were weary or they had delivered their letters. Yet at the last they won so far that they came to the sea near Denmark. Many a hardship they endured, or they found the land and saw the king.

They asked for an escort and were given the best; for it was told to Horant, who was a courteous man. Likewise all they had heard concerning Hetel and Hilda they found to be true, for they saw their land swarming with helmets and shields.

Horant of Denmark bade the strangers, Hartmut's kinsmen, be escorted to the court; nor did they that did it grudge the trouble. When the Hegelings saw the envoys coming they all said that whatsoever their business might be, they must be mighty men, from their bearing; and a full report was brought to the king.

The Normans were lodged, and orders given that they should be well served. Hetel knew not what they sought in his country, and on the twelfth morning he sent for Hartmut's envoys.

A count was among them of right noble mien, and the apparel that they wore was valued at no little sum. They rode the best horses to be found anywhere, and came before the king at court pranked out in their best. Then the host greeted them fair, and his men did the like. Yet they profited not thereby, for they were scornfully entreated afterwards, when it was found that they came a-wooing. Little favour did Hetel show, I trow, to Hartmut.

When one that could read had read the letters aloud, the king sorely grudged them the escort that worthy Horant, the good knight, had given them. But for this, they had fared ill by Hetel.

"King Hartmut hath done you a hurt, noble envoys," he said, "in that he sent you hither, and ye must suffer for it. Hartmut's message greatly irketh me and Queen Hilda."

And one among them made answer, "He bade us tell thee that, if he love the maid, and she be willing to wear the crown before his kinsmen in Normandy, the service of Hartmut, the blameless knight, will well repay thee."

But Queen Hilda said, "How could she wed him? His father did homage to my father Hagen for a

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hundred and three castles in Karadê. It were not meet for my kinsfolk to take from Ludwig's hand what he hath received from my father. He dwelled in Friedeschotten, and deserved the hate that King Otto's brother bare him, who was also the vassal of my father Hagen. He was his bitter foe, and suffered for it at the hand of the king. Tell Hartmut she will never be his wife. That the knight should dare to deck out his body to win the love of my daughter! He shall go elsewhere to win a queen for his land."

Whereat the envoys were heavy of their cheer, and sore misliked to ride back so many far miles in sorrow and in shame to Normandy.

Ludwig and King Hartmut were wroth at what they had endured, and young Hartmut said, "Tell me truly if ye saw Hagen's grandchild. Is Gudrun as beautiful as report proclaimeth her? May God abase Hetel for his ill will toward me!"

The rich count answered him, "All that see the damsel must admire her and extol her above all maids and mothers for her virtues."

Cried King Hartmut then, "I will not rest till I have won her."

Queen Gerlint lamented, weeping, and said, "Woe is me, dear child, that ever we sent our envoys after her! Might I but live to see her in this land!"

ELEVENTH ADVENTURE

HOW HERWIG AND HARTMUT CAME WOOING GUDRUN

THEY let this matter of the envoys rest for many years. Then a new thing happened, whereof I will tell you truly, concerning a young man called Herwig, who was seen so oft striving for honour that his fame endureth still.

He began to woo in the hope that the fair maid would take him to be her dear one. He essayed it often at the cost of much travail and wealth. Yet, however the damsel was minded, King Hetel would have none of him.

That he strove in vain, and that his envoys came in peril of their lives there, irked him grimly, and his proud heart was the yoke-fellow of sorrow. He showed plain his desire to be with Gudrun.

It came to pass by some means or other that knights and maids and lovely women also saw Hartmut there among the Hegelings without Hetel's knowledge. The battle-eager man was come thither, but none knew the noble guests, and Hartmut and his kinsmen were well entertained. He hoped still that the maiden would wear the crown with him.

The eyes of noble women were upon him when, with high courtesy, he advanced and stood before Queen Hilda. They saw by proud Hartmut's bearing that he had the right to woo fair women. He was tall,

well-favoured and swift, gracious and bold. I know not what he had done that Hetel and Queen Hilda denied him their royal daughter; it angered Hartmut sore.

He had now seen her whom his heart longed for. Of secret glances there were plenty. He told her privily that his name was Hartmut, and that he was come from Normandy.

She sent back answer that it grieved her (for the noble maiden desired his death in no wise), and that he must flee from the court, if he would escape with his life from Hetel and all his men.

She saw him to be so goodly that her heart counselled her towards him, albeit his envoys had left the land covered with reproach. She that his heart coveted showed him favour, although she gave him little else that he longed for.

So the gallant stranger rode thence, bearing on his back this great burden, how to avenge his wrong on Hetel, yet not lose the good will of the beautiful maiden.

So Hartmut quitted the Hegelings, half in hope, half in fear, as to his winning of the damsel. Yea, many a helmet afterwards was hewn for her sake.

When he reached his land where he had left his father and mother, grim Hartmut made ready for fierce war, and Gerlint, the old she-devil, urged him thereto continually.

TWELFTH ADVENTURE

HOW HERWIG MADE WAR ON HETEL, AND GUDRUN
WAS GIVEN TO HIM

LET us now leave off considering how it fared with him further.

Bold Herwig, no less than Hartmut, longed for high-born Gudrun, and he and all his kinsmen strove eagerly for the maid. He was her neighbour, and his land marched with hers; but, had he sent thither a thousand times a day, he had found only pride and scorn. Yet, though they all denied him, he won Gudrun in the end.

Hetel bade him leave off wooing his child, but he sent the king an angry answer, that he would not give over till he was seen there with shields, to the hurt of Hetel and Queen Hilda.

I know not who counselled him thereto, but Herwig won to his cause three thousand bold men that were his friends, and wrought among the Hege-lings havoc to her that he had gladly served with all manner of love.

They believed it not in Sturm-land, nor were the men of Denmark aware of it, till Ortwin, King of Ortland, heard how Herwig sought Hetel with a mighty host.

When Hetel knew that Herwig was boldly leading

an army thither, he said to his men and to the queen, "What say ye? I hear that guests will visit us."

"What should I say but good? Whether a knight be for us or against us, I approve him so long as he doeth honourably. How can he fail? For Herwig is valiant and wise. We must see to it well," spake the noble woman, "that our warriors here be not worsted. I have heard that it is to win thanks from your daughter that he seeketh your borders with his knights."

The king and his men delayed over long, and it was Herwig that began the fray. One morning, while it was still cool, he and his knights came up to Hetel's stronghold, where he did valiantly afterwards in the onset.

While the knights still slept in Hetel's hall, a watchman cried down to them from without, "Wake up, ho! ye in the castle! We have strangers for our guests. To arms, O heroes! for I see many a bright helmet glittering."

They lay no longer, but sprang from their beds. All that were there feared both for life and honour. Thus Herwig sought his wife in fierce battle.

Hetel and Queen Hilda were come to the window. Herwig had with him a tribe that dwelled at the foot of a mountain in Waleis; stark Morunc from the march of Waleis knew it well.

Hetel saw them charge the door. Certes, Gudrun's father, albeit he was brave, had been loath to stand without, but his burgesses stood him in good stead.

An hundred or more within were armed. The host himself fought with a will. But though his men were brave, it availed not against the foemen, and Hetel suffered scathe from King Herwig.

Swift from the helmets King Herwig smote the

fire-hot wind. Fair Gudrun, the host's daughter, saw it, and feasted her eyes thereon. She deemed the knight valiant and was both glad and sorry.

Grim of his mood, Hetel bare weapons himself. He was strong of his body and mighty enow, but herein he did not well. Then Herwig won so nigh that they in the castle saw the battle plainly. When they would have shut to the gate, they could not compass it, and began to strive there with the guests. All Herwig's hope was fixed upon the reward of a fair woman.

Hetel and Herwig, the good knights, spurred forward in front of their men. Then flame leapt from the bucklers that hung down from their hands. It was not long or they had proven each other.

When King Hetel saw proud Herwig so valiant he cried in the battle, "They that grudged me this knight to my friend knew him not. For he heweth deep wounds and deadly."

Fair Gudrun saw the combat and heard the din. Fortune is round like a ball. Since the maiden could not part the fray, she was fain that her father and his guest might both have their desire.

Then she cried aloud to him from across the hall, "Hetel, honoured father, the blood floweth down through the hauberks, that our walls are wet therewith. Herwig is a bad neighbour. Proclaim a truce for my sake, and rest heart and body for a season, till I have asked you both concerning Prince Herwig's noblest kinsmen."

But the bold knight answered, "No truce will I make, save thou let me come before thee unarmed, O Princess. I will tell thee who my best kinsmen be. If a truce be agreed on, thou mayest ask me what thou wilt."

The strife was ended for the maiden's sake, and the battle-weary men drew off their armour, and washed away the stain on their harness with water. They were goodly to behold; it had been ill done to grudge them their lives.

Herwig went with an hundred of his warriors where, divided in her mind, Gudrun with the other women received him. The noble knight and good did not trust them altogether.

Then the lovely maiden bade the guests sit down, for Herwig's prowess had won him love, and his great courtesy commended him to Hilda and her daughter alike. They counselled them to end the battle straightway.

Herwig said to the women, "I have heard (though haply ye rue it after my much striving) that ye scorn me because of my kinsmen, but great folk have often lived happily with poor ones."

She answered, "What woman would hate or scorn such service from a knight? Believe me," said Gudrun, "I despise it not. No maiden thou hast ever seen is better inclined to thee than I am. If my nearest friends would allow it, I would grant thy wish and abide by thee."

With loving glances he looked in her face. She, too, cherished him in her heart, and spake without lying in presence of the people.

The bold knight begged leave to woo the maiden, which Hetel and Hilda granted, after they had both asked their daughter whether she was willing or loath.

It was not long or he knew her mind. The good knight stood before the damsel as if he had been drawn by the hand of a master upon a white wall. On such wise stood the hero.

"If thou wilt love me, O maiden most fair, with

heart and soul I will obey thy every behest. My castles and my kinsmen shall all serve thee, and I will never rue it."

She answered, "I like thee well. By thy valour this day thou hast deserved that I end the feud betwixt thee and my kinsmen. Of this I will never repent. Thou shalt have joy with me evermore."

Hetel asked her straightway, counselled thereto by his men, if she would have Herwig the good knight to her husband, and the beautiful maiden answered, "I desire none other for my dear one." Whereupon they delayed no longer, but betrothed the fair princess to the knight, who promised to crown her queen in his country. Both joy and sorrow he won with her, for many a good warrior's body suffered in battle or long, because she was given him to wife.

He thought to lead the maiden home with him, but her mother allowed it not. Wherefore later he endured much scathe from strangers.

Hilda told the king that she desired to make her daughter more fit for her crown; and they prevailed on Herwig to leave her there, and to while away a year with beautiful women in other parts.

This was heard by the men of Alzabê, that took counsel straightway against Herwig.

THIRTEENTH ADVENTURE

HOW SIEGFRIED MADE WAR ON HERWIG

THEREUPON Siegfried, the prince, made ready for war, and east round for ships. All that he could find he bade them fill quickly with weapons and food, to the hurt of Herwig. He summoned his friends secretly, and let twenty strong vessels be builded. They that he told of his intent to make war on Zealand were not, I ween, over pleased.

The journey was fixed for the time when the hard winter should be ended. He brought together eighty thousand knights, that the land of Alzabê was empty of folk, for the king of the Moors had sworn to go to battle. Some tarried behind, but the others followed him at his behest.

He bade war be declared on Zealand, whereat the prince of the country was troubled, and complained with reason, for he had done naught to deserve the mighty king's hate.

He gave orders that his castles and marches should be the better guarded, and bewailed it to all the friends he could find, that a foe came to burn and lay waste his land. He paid freely for service with what he had, which pleased them that worked for hire.

About the May-time the knights of Abakê and of Alzabê crossed the sea in such force that they might have meant to fare to the world's end. Many voyaged merrily that or long lay low in the dust.

They harried Herwig's land with fire, that called on the friends he had summoned to his aid, to ride forth with him. They fought grim battles, and paid with their lives for what was given to them—gold, silver, or precious stones.

The Prince of Zealand was wroth at the hurt they did him. He was a valiant hero. Aha! how he fought till he had dunged the fields with the dead! It made the old men young to see him, and cloven was many a head.

The fight endured long, and many were slain. Noble Herwig came off with such loss that he had to fall back on his marches, and his land smoked from end to end.

He sent word then to the princess, and bade envoys ride to Hetel's kingdom. Weeping they rode, till they had given the message and saw Hetel, the great king, to whom they bewailed their hopeless case.

Albeit their mien was sorrowful, he welcomed them as friends should be welcomed in a strange land, and asked how they had won out of their lord's country, seeing that all the castles were taken, and all the march laid waste by fire.

They answered, "We be won hither through much peril. Night and morning Herwig's men earn his gifts with their lives. They woo honour hard, by reason whereof many women weep there."

Then said King Hetel, "Go to my daughter. What she desireth herein I will do. If she would have us avenge this scathe in the land, it shall be avenged to the full, and all Herwig's wrong."

Or the envoys came to the beautiful maiden, the folk saw plainly her heart's sorrow. She could not wait for them, but summoned them to her, and mourned for her lost land and honour. So the envoys

went where the noble and true-hearted maiden sat in tears, and she asked them how they parted from her dear lord, and if he lived still when they left the country.

Whereto one among them answered, "We left him whole, but know not what the Moors have done since we rode thence. Many are slain. They have wasted all with fire. Hear, noble maiden, the message my lord hath sent to thee. He and his knights are come in grievous peril, and fear daily to lose both life and honour. Now would King Herwig prove thy faith, most high Princess."

Gudrun the fair damsel rose from her seat. Both wrongs were told to the king: how that their folk were slain, and their castles ruined near and far.

She entreated her father Hetel to ride to Herwig's help. With wet eyes she embraced him, crying, "Thy help, great King! My loss is all too great, unless thy knights with willing hands aid my friends. None can do it so well as they."

"I promise thee that I will help Herwig or many days are gone, and none shall hinder me. I will do my utmost to end his evil fortune, and will summon old Wate and the rest. He will bring from Sturmland all the men he hath; and when the knight of Morunc heareth the state of the country, haply he will bring me a thousand good warriors at the least. The enemy will soon find that we be no cowards under our helmets. Horant of Denmark will join us on the way with three thousand knights, and Sir Irolt shall lead his folk behind his standard. Ortwin, thy brother, will also come, that my daughter may praise us for our help."

Envoys, dispatched by the princess, spurred away in hot haste. She promised great honour to all who

would help her to avenge her wrong. Gracious was her greeting to heroes, wherefore she won the more knights.

Hilda, the maiden's mother, spake on the same wise, "Whoever rideth behind his shield to the help of thy friend, shall share, when he goeth forth, all the wealth we may ever win."

They opened the chests and carried to the court what they knew lay therein: good harness studded with steel. Many a silver-white coat of mail they brought for the heroes, whereat the young princess rejoiced. To a thousand knights, at the least, the host gave horses and apparel. They led them from the stalls, as they had often done when they rode afar to fight. The king left not many behind him.

Hetel took leave of his wife then, whereat Hilda and her daughter began to weep; yet they were glad to see the warriors that went with him. They said, "God in heaven give you both honour and fame in battle."

When they came out from the castle gate, many a youth was heard singing, because of the plunder they hoped for in the war, but they had far to ride, for the foemen were not nigh at hand.

On the third morning old Wate joined them with a thousand knights, and on the seventh morning came Horant of Denmark, that Gudrun had sent for, with four thousand. Sir Morunc came from the march of Waleis, ready to do battle for the sake of fair women, and brought, at the least, two thousand men; they were all well armed and rode merrily on the way. Sir Ortwin, the brother of the princess, led four thousand warriors, or more, across the sea for his sister. Had the men of Alzabê known it, they had surely been sore afraid.

When they drew nigh to his help, Herwig with his men had failed in every venture, wherefore he and his comrades in war had suffered much scathe. The enemy had ridden close to his castle gate. From Siegfried's kinsmen they had endured all manner of annoy. Through breach of faith and overweening pride they had overthrown the towers and strong castles, and when one findeth any that doeth this, one accounteth it evil.

The envoys spurred ahead and told Herwig and his men the news. By reason of their hate, the foemen attacked them late and early, but now Herwig's allies drew openly from all quarters.

The men of Karadé were sorry when they perceived it. Two kings were there that had little reward for their trouble, when King Hetel and his good knights rode against them from afar.

When they saw they were Herwig's kinsmen they made ready to withstand them. The Moorish host fought in battle as they would flee for none. Whoso encountered them must needs toil hard for reward.

Then bold Wate came up with a great force, for he had brought many warriors to Herwig, that was betrothed to fair Gudrun. However it went with them in the fray, they rode merrily out of it. And the Moors, also, albeit they were heathens, stood fast and approved them the best knights on earth. To many a guest before this they had given a grim lodging.

Herwig of Zealand took vengeance on them of Alzabê, wherefore both armies suffered, and the kinsmen of both leaders received many wounds. King Hetel misliked it sore. When they whom I tell you of were met, sorrow without joy was their lot, and fear of what might befall them in the night.

They said to themselves, "How shall we live till the morning?"

They fought three battles with the Moors, and for that space the towns had peace, according to knightly usage. Grimly with swords and spears they sought to decide the matter, nor desired a truce; therefore the more of them were wounded. Neither they of the land nor the strangers would give over fighting. Their best men lay dead on the field, yet they would not stop. Measureless was the grief of the women when they heard this.

What wonders old Wate did in battle! He was right skilled in war, and many a stranger won a heavy heart through him, for they saw him with his knights ever among the boldest.

Horant of Denmark, too, was valiant enow. How many strong helmets he clave with his arm! Neither forgot he to show his vengeance on the bright harness. He thinned the ranks of the foemen.

Bold Morunc was not slow to stretch his hand undismayed over the edge of his shield. He yielded no whit to the high and mighty King of the Moors, but avenged Herwig's scathe on him.

And because his beautiful daughter had sent him to free Herwig's land, Hetel fought on such wise that they who loved their lives did well to leave him his marches in peace. Herwig himself fought also, and none better, before the gate and in the field, that his head was often wet with blood beneath his mail. Many were stunned that thought to force him back.

Good Wigâleis wrought havoc among the guests, and Frute of Denmark did such knightly deeds that thanks were his due, with honour. He was skilled in battle; none ever heard of an old hero so valiant.

Of young Ortwin, the Knight of Ortland, many

tongues proclaimed it, that none had a bolder arm in strife; they all said that grim were the wounds he gave.

They had now fought hard for twelve days. Hetel's heroes were seen hewing the shields boldly before the king, that the proud Moors had cause to rue their journey. And on the thirteenth morning before early Mass, Siegfried spake sadly, "Look, how many of our good knights lie here. The King of Zealand hath fought well for love."

He took counsel with them of Karadê (they and the men of Alzabê were not loath) and resolved to ride to a stronghold for safety, before they were all slain. So they fled to a secure place, where on one side a great river ran. When they started to ride off for refuge, they that grudged them this comfort fought to hinder them on their way. Siegfried rode at King Hetel, and it was easily heard that what had passed already was but a beginning, now that he had found the man that had hewn his kinsmen with so many wounds.

Hetel of the Hegelings and Siegfried fought their best as proud warriors. Bright shields were cloven by their hands, but the King of the Moors had to flee before the Dane.

Then the men of Denmark camped round about to besiege them, and none can deny that it went ill with the bold guests thereafter. Though their stronghold was good, not a few of them had liefer been at home.

The bold warriors were shut in there by their foes, that they could not give battle in the open field, even had it been desired of them; but they defended their fortress the best they could.

FOURTEENTH ADVENTURE

HOW HETEL SENT ENVOYS FROM HERWIG'S COUNTRY

THEN Hetel dispatched a message home, that they need grieve no more. He bade them tell the brave women that old and young had prospered in the onset and the battle, and that they might await them in good hope. He sent word, too, that he and his men had laid siege to the foe, and faithfully served Gudrun and him of Zealand. What their hands could do they did daily.

Whereupon beautiful Hilda wished good fortune to Herwig and all his men, that with honour they might prosper. "God grant," she said, "that they bring us back our friends safe and sound!"

Then the men of Sturm-land let the Moors and them of Alzabê come down to the sea, where they lay in great peril, for in Wate and Frute they had evil neighbours.

Hetel swore an oath that he would not stir from the place, nor quit the heath, till he and his men had taken the Moors captive for ransom, that had done foolishly and made war to their hurt.

Now there were spies of Hartmut come thither from Normandy, who watched narrowly what went forward, and grudged Hetel all good. But they heard little to their liking, and saw how, night and day,

the noble knight of Karadê lay besieged to his great annoy, and that the matter neared not an end. They could look for no help, for their land lay too far off. Then the messengers that Ludwig and Hartmut had sent returned to Normandy in haste, and told there the welcome tidings that Hetel and Herwig were busy at war.

For this glad news the Prince of Normandy thanked them, and asked, "Can ye tell me how long the men of Karadê will stay by their foemen in Zealand, or when they will avenge their wrong?"

"O King, I say sooth," answered one of the envoys; "they must tarry a year at the least, for the Hegelings give them no peace, but have so surrounded them that they cannot win out to the open sea."

"Ha! by what hopes are my fears now chased away!" cried bold Hartmut of Normandy. "Since they are so close besieged that they must give battle or Hetel return home, we will ride thither to the Hegelings."

Ludwig and Hartmut agreed that, could they raise ten thousand knights, they might carry off Gudrun, before Hetel returned with his men. And old Gerlint rested not for thinking how she might be avenged on Hetel for denying his child to her son Hartmut with scornful words; she had gladly hanged both Wate and Frute.

The old she-devil said, "Ye shall have great reward if ye ride thither. I will keep my gold and silver from the women and give it to the knights. Little care I how Hetel and Hilda rue it."

"We will sail from Normandy in battle array with my warriors," said Ludwig. "I hope to have twenty thousand men shortly, wherewith to carry off Gudrun."

And young Hartmut cried, "Could I but behold Hilda's daughter, that we might dwell lovingly together, I would not take the greatest kingdom in lieu thereof!"

So they considered earnestly how to compass it, and Ludwig won an army to lead to the Hegelings. How could Hilda know the evil that drew nigh?

Ludwig's wife strove without cease that Gudrun should dwell lovingly by Hartmut, and rested not from her endeavour, that with his arms he might embrace her.

Said Ludwig to Hartmut his son, "Now bethink thee, good knight, of the peril before us, or we can bring the folk from their home. If thou pay the guests that be come from far, I will reward my knights here at hand."

They bestowed great gifts on all and sundry, that none in Swabia had ever won such horses and sumpter mules, or such saddles and shields. They did it gladly: never before gave Ludwig so freely. In haste they made ready for their journey. Ludwig had to his service good mariners that knew well the paths of the sea, and that laboured through the waves after high reward.

Their preparations were now well-nigh made, and it was noised abroad that Ludwig and Hartmut were about to quit their land; but they were greatly troubled how to win to the Hegelings. Then they came down to the shore, and found on the sands the ships builded strong at Gerlint's own cost, that were to carry them thither.

And of all this old Wate and Frute of Denmark knew nothing.

They crossed the sea with three-and-twenty thousand men. Hartmut yearned sore for Gudrun, and

showed it plainly to all his kinsmen, for he led a great force against King Hetel. They knew not the course to take and many a mother's child came in peril; but the waves bare them to Ortlund, where they saw Hilda's castle, or Hetel had any word thereof. Hartmut's host came on the deep waters within twelve miles of the Hegeling land, that they saw the palace and the towers of the fortress of fair Hilda.

Then Ludwig of Normandy bade them cast anchor on the strand, and make all the haste they could from the ships, for he was come so nigh that he feared lest the Hegelings might see them.

When they were now come ashore they darkened many a shield and good helmet with coverings, and made ready for strife after they had dispatched messengers to find if haply they had any friends in Hetel's land.

FIFTEENTH ADVENTURE

HOW HARTMUT CARRIED OFF GUDRUN BY FORCE

HARTMUT sent forward his envoys, who straightway told Queen Hilda and her dear daughter that, if his wooing were allowed, he would do what would content them both for love of her. And if she would wed him, as aforetime he had besought her, he would serve her his whole life long, and share with her his father's kingdom, for often had he yearned towards her in his thoughts; but that, if she would not, he would hate her. He asked the maiden's leave thus, in the hope that he might bring her to his land without a battle.

"But if she gainsay it," he said further, "nothing will turn me from my purpose, and I will see to it that fair Gudrun hath my knights to feast her eyes on or I depart hence. Nay, more than this, my good envoys, shall ye tell her: liefer will I be hewn in pieces than return across the wide sea without the princess of the Hegelings. If she still deny me, she will see me come riding with my warriors. To right and left of the road before the castle I will leave twenty thousand slain. Since Hegel has followed the counsel of him of Wigâleis, and of old Wate and forced us to these many long journeys hither, not a few shall be orphaned, for I am minded to bring the matter to an end."

Then the envoys spurred off in haste, as Hartmut commanded them, for it was high time, and came to a great castle called Matelâne, wherein Queen Hilda and the fair young princess, her daughter, dwelled.

He sent thither two mighty lords that he had brought with him from Normandy, that they might earnestly commend him to Hilda: how that he would never cease from serving her, and that she would do well to give him the maiden, seeing he held her dearer than all others, for still it was on love he thought. If she did this, how that she would have all that was her due, by reason of her high birth, and that he would never weary in doing her pleasure.

It was told to them that watched over the women, that Norman knights were come wooing to Matelâne; whereupon Queen Hilda bade them hold their peace, for the beautiful maid was frightened.

Hilda's officers opened the gate, that they might not leave the envoys any longer without. They threw the gate wide, and bade the envoys of Hartmut ride in.

These asked to see Hetel's queen, which was denied them by the knights that guarded her beautiful body, as it behoved the king's honour. Hilda and high-born Gudrun were never left unguarded.

When now Hartmut's men were come to court, fair Hilda began to greet them, and Gudrun did the like with a proud mien. The good and noble maiden loved noble Herwig from her heart. Albeit they little liked them, they bade wine be poured for them or they delivered their message, and Hilda gave them leave to sit down in the presence of her and her daughter, telling them to make known to her what they sought.

The whole company rose courteously from their

seats, as envoys do to this day, and declared what they desired from the Hegelings: how that Hartmut, their lord, had sent them after fair Gudrun.

But the noble maiden answered, "I will never consent to have Hartmut stand by my side under a king's crown before my kinsmen. Herwig is the name of him I would reward for his love, and to him I am betrothed. I promised I would have him to my husband, and he hath taken me to his wife. I rejoice at whatever honour may befall him, and none other will I have for my dear one."

Then one of the envoys said, "Hartmut bade us tell thee that, if thou deny him his hope, thou shalt see him on the third morning with his knights before Matelâne." Whereat the beautiful maiden laughed.

The envoys, two rich earls, asked leave to depart, but, although they were strangers, Hilda offered them a gift of great worth, which they took not, for crafty was their wooing.

Hetel's warriors told the envoys that they cared little for their scorn and their hate, and that, if they would not drink King Hetel's wine, they would pour blood for them instead.

So they brought this word back to the place whence Hartmut had dispatched them, and he ran to meet them, asking how they had fared, and if high-born Gudrun had received them kindly with his message.

Whereupon one of them made answer, "Thy suit hath been denied, for the royal maid hath a dear one whom she loveth in her heart more than any, and if thou wilt not drink her wine, thy blood shall be poured out instead."

"Woe is me for this shame," cried Hartmut. "My heart is heavy at this news. But better friends I need not than they that help me in battle."

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Then all that lay on the beach sprang up, and wrathfully Ludwig and Hartmut led forward their host with flying banners.

From the ramparts of Matelane they saw their pennons gleaming from afar, and the beautiful maiden cried, "Oh, joy! There come Hetel and my lord!"

But they saw they were not their master's banners and said, "Ah woe! A great misadventure befallerh us! Grim guests come wooing the Princess Gudrun, and many a strong helmet will be hewn before night."

The Hegelings said to Hilda, "Whatsoever the men of Hartmut essay, we will hinder it with deep wounds."

But the queen commanded them to shut to the castle gate without tarrying.

Nevertheless Hetel's bold men would not do it. The defenders of the land bound their lord's banner to the pole, that they might forth from the castle to slay the noble guests. The bars that should all have been left down were withdrawn through their pride, for they despised the watchful cunning of Hartmut. So it fell that the first of Hartmut's men, pressing in, jostled the last of the Hegelings that went forth.

When a thousand or more with drawn swords stood ready, Hartmut rode up with a thousand men, that dismounted on the heath and sent their horses away. They bare sharp pointed shafts in their hands. Who was there to stop the battle? They began to give the townsfolk deep wounds; and Ludwig of Normandy, also, rode up with his men.

The women feared greatly when he drew nigh, for they saw his broad banners plain, and under each of them three thousand men that pressed grimly forward, heedless of how they would win off later.

Near and far all were busy. Bolder knights none ever saw than those of Hetel's castle; they could deal wounds, and valiantly withstood Hartmut's heroes. Bold Ludwig of Normandy with the might of his chest struck a red glow from the hard bucklers, and his comrades in battle were bold enow.

When the townsfolk deemed them secure, Hartmut's father from Normandy advanced with his valiant warriors, for he wished his son all good, which was well shown that day.

The proud burgesses began to suffer for having scorned the counsel of beautiful Queen Hilda, Hetel's wife. Many a shield was darkened, and many a life lost.

Ludwig and Hartmut, when they were won nigh to one another, saw that the Hegelings would have barred Queen Hilda's gate, whereat with loud clashing of shields, their standards were borne into the castle. Little they heeded the shooting and throwing from the wall, for their valour was great; nor gave they thought to the dead, when heroes bowed down beneath heavy stones. Ludwig and Hartmut won through the door, and left many wounded lying there; whereat the high-born maiden began to weep. Yet still more grievous hurt soon befell Hetel's stronghold.

The King of Normandy was merry enow when he and his men bare their country's banners before the hall of Hetel, and caused them to wave above on the battlements; but the noble queen sorrowed sore.

I wonder how it had gone with the guests had grim Wate seen how the knights of Hartmut and Ludwig strode through the hall when they carried off Gudrun. Had any told them, Wate and Hetel had so smitten good helmets with their swords that they had never borne Gudrun captive to Normandy.

All the folk therein were sorrowful, as they would

be to-day in like case. They who desired to plunder carried all manner of treasure from the palace. Trow me, the men of Hartmut grew rich.

Then bold Hartmut went before Gudrun and said, "Thou hast ever scorned me. Now were it meet that I and my friends should so scorn thee as to take none alive, but slay and hang you all."

For only answer she wailed, "Ah woe is me, my father! Knewest thou how they carry thy daughter off captive from thy land, such wrong and such shame had never befallen me, a poor princess."

When they had heaped treasure and apparel outside, they led Hilda thither by her white hand, for they were about to burn the good town of Matelâne, caring not what came of it.

But Hartmut forbade them to burn the castle, and made all the haste he could to be off, or Hetel's vassals and kinsmen that lay at the march of Waleis with their army should hear the news.

"Let nothing be taken," said Hartmut. "I will give you of my father's treasure at home; so shall we fare the lighter across the sea."

Sorrowful was Gudrun because of Ludwig's might. The castle was pillaged, the town was burned, and the noblest were taken captive; two-and-sixty women, lovely damsels all, they carried thence, whereat the heart of high-born Hilda was wrung with woe. Ah, doleful was the king's wife when they left her standing there! She ran to a window to look down after the beautiful maidens, that left many fair women behind them mourning in the land.

Loud was the wailing and weeping. None were merry when Hilda's daughter was borne away with her attendants. Many a valiant knight's son suffered for it when he was old.

Hartmut brought the captives to the shore, and left the kingdom burnt and harried. The time there had sped to his desire; and Gudrun and Hildeburg he took away bound.

He knew well that Hetel waged war at a distance; wherefore he sailed from that coast; yet scarce was he gone when Queen Hilda sent the news to King Hetel and his friends. How woefully she sent word that his knights at home lay dead, bloodily slain by Hartmut, and that his daughter was taken captive, and, with her, many fair damsels!

"Tell the king, ye envoys, that I am all alone, and have fared ill. With a proud heart great Ludwig returneth to his land, and a thousand or more lie miserably without the gate."

In three days Hartmut had embarked. His knights had seized for plunder all that they could carry with them, for Hetel's men had been sore worsted.

How they fared after this who can tell you? The wind roared and rocked in their sails as they turned from that coast, and made for a desert island called Wülpensand.

SIXTEENTH ADVENTURE

HOW HILDA SENT ENVOYS TO HETEL AND HERWIG

HILDA, the high-born woman, strove heart and soul to get envoys to King Hetel. All her sorrow came from Hartmut, that left only grief for her eyes. She bade them tell her husband and Herwig that her daughter was taken captive, that her warriors were dead, her gold and jewels carried away by the Normans over the sea, and that she was alone in her woe.

The envoys rode hard and spurred through the land, for their queen had dispatched them in her sore trouble, and on the seventh morning they came where the Hegelings held the Moors close beleaguered.

Every day there were knightly encounters, and the sound of sports was heard over all, that they might not weary by the siege; they raced and leapt and often threw the spear.

Horant of Denmark saw Hilda's envoys riding thither, and he said to the king, "They bring us news. God grant that no evil fortune hath befallen our warriors at home."

The king went out himself to meet them, and said courteously, "Welcome, ye knights, to this land. How is Hilda, my wife? Tell us who hath sent you."

"My mistress hath sent us hither," one of them

answered. "Thy castles are destroyed, thy land is burned, and Gudrun and her maidens are borne away captive. The country will, I ween, nevermore recover from such scathe." And further he said, "I have more to bewail to thee, by reason whereof we came in great peril. Of thy kinsmen and vassals a thousand or more are dead. Thy treasure hath been carried off to the land of a foreign king; they have seized thy hoard, which is a shame to good warriors."

Hetel asked who had done this, and a squire of one of the knights answered him, "It was Ludwig of Normandy, and Hartmut. They led foemen against us to our hurt."

"They have done this because I denied Hartmut my beautiful daughter," said Prince Hetel. "I knew that the King of Normandy did homage for his land to Hagen, and, as befitted our honour, refused to send Gudrun thither. Let us keep this news from our enemies, and bewail it in secret to our friends. Bid our kinsmen be summoned straightway. Worse could not have befallen our good knights at home."

Then they sent for Herwig to come to court, with the friends and kinsmen of the king and his other men. When these good knights were come they saw that Hetel was troubled of his cheer.

The prince of the Hegelings said, "I will bewail my sorrow to you, trusting to your love. My wife Hilda hath sent me a message: how that it standeth right dolefully with the Hegelings. My land is harried by fire, and my castles destroyed. They have guarded our home ill since we left. My daughter is taken captive, and my kinsmen are slain, that had my land and my honour in their keeping."

Then Herwig wept to see Hetel's eyes wet with tears; and when they saw these two weeping, all the

others did the like. None that stood by the king was merry.

Said old Wate then, "Betray naught of this. The hurt we have suffered in our friends we will make good with much rejoicing hereafter. Right sorrowful will we make the kinsmen of Hartmut and of Ludwig."

Hetel asked, "How so?" and Wate answered, "We must make peace with the King of the Moors and his followers; so shall we lead these knights with us after Gudrun, thy fair child." And this wise counsel he also added: "To-morrow early let us encounter the strangers here on such wise that they shall despair of ever bringing their folk hence, save with our consent."

Whereupon bold Herwig cried, "It is well said. Get ready to fight, and let us show to-morrow how we can meet the foe. Whatever betide us, I am measureless sad for the maiden."

So they made ready for strife, with horses and harness, and gladly followed the counsel of old Wate; and when the dawn appeared, they strove grimly with them of Abakê, and won thereby both praise and honour.

Everywhere they bare the banners into the thick of the fight, and many that were whole were slain.

The men of Sturm-land shouted, "Forward!" whereat they that were fain to conquer the Moors went the swifter in the battle.

Irolt cried over the edge of his shield, "Will ye make peace with us, ye Moorish knights? My lord, King Hetel, hath bidden us ask you. Your land is too far off, and ye lose both wealth and kinsmen."

But Siegfried, the King of the Moors, answered, "If ye win the victory ye will have good pledges in them ye take captive. I will treat with none, save as

befitteth mine honour. If ye think to overcome us, the more will be lost on both sides."

Then Sir Frute said, "Promise to stand by us with friendly service, and ye shall be free of attack from my master's country henceforth."

Whereupon the men of Karadê held out their hands in token of peace.

So they were reconciled, as I have told you. The valiant knights went to one another, and they that were foemen afore offered their service to each other. Their hate was ended, and they began to plan the hurt of the Normans.

Now for the first time King Hetel told the King of the Moors the sad news his messengers had brought him, and vowed that if he would help him to punish Hartmut for his shameful dealing, he would serve him to his life's end.

Then said Sir Siegfried of Alzabê, "Could we but find them it would fare ill with them!"

"I know the way they must take across the water," answered Wate. "It is close at hand. We might easily overtake them on the sea."

But Hetel said to them all, "Where can I find ships? How can I hurt them, even if I would, unless I make ready at home to follow them to their country, and, meeting them there, avenge on them both my loss and my sorrow?"

"There might be a way," answered old Wate. "What he hath to do, God doeth with power. Here in this land, close by, I know of at least seventy staunch vessels, full of good food. They lie on the shore, and have carried pilgrims over the sea. These we must win, whatever betide. The pilgrims must tarry in patience on this coast till we are reconciled with our foemen, or have overcome them."

Whereupon old Wate betook him straightway thither; but the others held back, doubting. He asked them whether they had aught for sale, and said he was come to buy. He lost many a kinsman later because of this, and it ended ill for himself.

There were three thousand or more on the strand—this I know of a surety—that had not time to prepare for battle before the king drew nigh with a mighty host. Their silver and apparel, that Wate had no need of, were carried to them on shore, but their food, for all they could do, was kept on the water. Wate vowed it would be made good to them as soon as he and his friends returned.

The pilgrims wailed and were in grievous plight, but he cared not a single crumb what they said or how they fared. He told them without smiling that they must give him both galleys and ships in pledge.

Hetel cared not whether they ever got to sea with their crosses or no. He took from their number more than five hundred of the best, whereof few were brought back whole to the Hegeling land.

I know not if Hetel and his men were punished because the homeless folk suffered heart-heaviness, and were parted in a strange land, but I think that God in heaven himself avenged this wrong.

Hetel and his men departed as soon as they could. They won a favouring wind and set sail after their enemies, hoping, when they had found them, to take vengeance for their hurt.

SEVENTEENTH ADVENTURE

HOW HETEL WENT TO THE WÜLPENSAND AFTER HIS DAUGHTER

Now were King Ludwig and King Hartmut encamped with their men by the sea on a desert shore, where they rested. They were a great host, but their numbers availed them little. It was on a broad island called the Wülpensand that misadventure grimly befell the Normans, after they had found comfort for themselves and their horses.

They had led the noble captives on to the wild beach, where the gentle maidens bare them sadly before their enemies, as they needs must.

Fires were seen all along the shore, and they that were come from far countries took their ease. They thought to tarry there seven nights or more with the beautiful women, but it fell out ill for them; for while Hartmut and his kinsmen lay in an unfrequented haven, their hope to rest there for seven days with the lovely damsels came to naught.

Fair Gudrun was now far from Matelâne, and the ease of Ludwig's men was troubled no longer by the fear that Wate and his men would do them a hurt. But a mariner saw a ship with rich sails rocking on the waves, and bade them tell the king.

When Hartmut and all his folk saw crosses on the sails, they said that pilgrims were aboard. And soon they saw three good ships and nine proud galleys

drawnigh, bearing over the water many a man that had seldom enow worn the cross on his vesture for God's honour; and this the Normans learned to their cost.

The pilgrims were now so close at hand that their helmets were seen shining. They brought Ludwig and his men trouble and sore scathe.

"Up!" cried Hartmut. "Here come my grim foemen!"

Thereupon they hasted to the beach, and there was heard the splash of oars pulled by many hands. Old and young on the shore sprang up ready for battle. Ludwig and Hartmut carried shields. They had often aforetime won easier to their land, but their desire for repose had misled them. They deemed that their enemy Hetel had no kinsmen left.

Then Ludwig cried aloud to all his men, for what he had done afore was but child's play, "Now for the first time must I fight with good heroes. I will enrich them evermore that withstand the foe under my banner!"

They bare Hartmut's standard also down to the shore, whereto the ships were come so nigh that spears, thrown from the water's edge, could win to them. Old Wate, I trow, was not idle behind his shield. Never was land so grimly defended.

The Hegelings pressed towards the beach, and fought valiantly with spears and with swords. They dealt so freely in blows that afterwards none desired their merchandise.

Everywhere they crowded in toward the beach. Wind never blew snow so thick from the Alps as the darts were hurled there. Even had they desired it, they had not been able now to end the fray. They fought with spears, and it was long or they won to land.

His foes stood so nigh to old Wate that he leapt fiercely on them. He was so grim of his mood that they perceived his intent plain, and Ludwig of Normandy ran at him, and threw a very sharp spear, that the fragments flew high into the wind; for Ludwig was bold.

Wate's followers came up then, and smote Ludwig through the helmet, that the sword's point pierced to his head. Had he not worn a shirt of goodly silk of Abalie under his harness this must have been his end. He scarce came off with his life, and had to flee from the spot. Wate was an ill guest when he sought victory among his foemen. Many a good knight perished by his hand.

Hartmut and Irolt ran at each other, and their weapons resounded on their helmets, that the din was heard through the tumult; Irolt was valiant, and bold was Hartmut likewise.

Herwig of Zealand, a famous knight and good, desiring to reach the land, sprang into the water, and stood deep in a wave up to the armpits. Bold Herwig, too, served grimly for a woman's sake. His foemen would fain have drowned this good knight in the sea, and many a strong shaft brake against him, but soon he won ashore to his enemies, and many a knight's wrong was avenged.

By the time they got to land, the waves were dyed by the slain. The red blood flowed wide around, farther than one could throw with a spear. Fiercer work was never done by heroes, and never were so many knights trampled to the ground; they that perished unwounded could have peopled a whole land, yet they that did them this hurt, I ween, were all lost themselves.

King Hetel with his men fought to recover his

dear child. The strangers that were with him, and his own men, carried hurt and scathe wherever they went, that many were found dead on the Wülpen-sand. The Normans and the Hegelings brought grim deeds in their hand for tribute. The Danes fought valiantly, and none that was fain to live durst await their onset. Ortwin and Morunc held the breach with such honour that few wrought more havoc with their strength. The heroes with their comrades wounded many.

I have heard tell also that the proud Moors pressed from their ships towards the enemy. Hetel hoped to profit in his straits through their help, for they were bold warriors, and the blood flowed from strong helmets. How could their prince have been bolder? Many a coat of mail he dimmed that day, for in fierce battle he was a famous knight and good. Or how could have old Wate, or Frute of Denmark, have been more valiant? To and fro the spears were hurled. Ortwin advanced merrily with his comrades and hewed many helmets, while Gudrun and the women with her wept bitterly.

The fierce combat endured the whole day. The press was great, for the folk longed to come at one another. It went ill with the gallant knights when Hetel's friends strove to win back his daughter.

At last the night drew on, that brought the king more hurt. Ludwig's men fought valiantly, as behoved them, for they knew not whither to flee. They smote deep wounds and guarded the princess.

The battle endured painfully from early morning until the night fell and made an end of it. Old and young did their utmost, nor had cause to feel ashamed. Then King Hetel forced his way to the King of Normandy.

EIGHTEENTH ADVENTURE

HOW LUDWIG SLEW HETEL AND SAILED AWAY BY NIGHT

With their sharp weapons uplifted, Hetel and Ludwig felt each the strength of the other, till Ludwig slew Hetel. It was heart-heavy news.

When fair Gudrun heard that the King of Matelâne was slain, she and all her women fell a-weeping, and wept so long that both sides pitied them. But when grim Wate knew that the king was dead, he began to bellow like a wild beast, and helmets shone red like the setting sun from his swift strokes. Terrible with anger were he and all his men.

But what could they do? The island was wet with hot blood. The Hegelings asked for no truce, for they sought to recover Gudrun on the Wülpensand.

The men of Waleis took vengeance for the king's death in battle; the Danes, too, stood by the Hegelings and the men of Ortland in their need. Goodly weapons broke in the hands of the valiant heroes. Bold Ortwin was fain to avenge his father, and Horant and his knights came up with their host.

The day was ended, and the night fallen, when the heroes began to hew for the first time deep wounds in earnest.

Then one of the Danes rushed at Horant, the sword in his hand ringing loud, for he thought him a foe;

wherefore Horant straightway did him grievous hurt, and wounded him to death.

And when he had slain his kinsman he bade them bear his banner behind his own, till he knew by the voice of him that carried it whom he had killed with his great strength, and wailed bitterly for the dead.

"Murder hath been done here," Herwig cried aloud. "Now that the night is fallen, we all slay one another, friend and stranger alike. If the fight continue till morning, not a third of us will be found alive."

Where Wate was heard in battle none was wise that came in his way, for no man could stand against his wrath. He sent many where they were to abide for ever.

Had they fought till break of day, the battle had been ended, for friends and foes lay slain with deadly wounds; but there was no moon and the light was gone, by reason whereof the Hegelings lost the victory.

Against their will the grim warriors gave over, and drew apart with weary hands, but not so far that they could not see each other's helmets and shields in the firelight.

Then Ludwig and Hartmut of Normandy went aside to speak together and the king asked his men why he should tarry there by bold Wate, that was fain to slay him. "Lie down with your heads on your shields," he counselled them craftily, "and make a great noise, that the Hegelings guess not that I would bring you hence if I can."

And his kinsmen and vassals obeyed him, and blew the trumpets and trombones loud, as if the land had been their own; wherein Ludwig showed his cunning.

There was noise and shouting over all, and they forbade the damsels to weep, threatening that those

who ceased not would be drowned, and that, if the voice of any was heard, she would be sunk in the sea.

They carried their belongings to the ship, and left their dead that had been slain. Many a friend was missing, which grieved them sore, and many galleys must needs be left behind empty.

So the Normans got to sea by a crafty device. The women were doleful that they could not tell their kinsmen of their departure, for the heroes knew naught thereof, but still lay on the Wülpensand. Or the day dawned they with whom the Danes thought to fight were already on their way.

Wate bade them blow his war-horn loud, and hasted towards those that he desired to fell with deep wounds. On horse and afoot the Hegelings, sinking in the sand, went after Ludwig and his men, to fight with them, but the Normans had sailed far on their course.

They found the ships empty, and raiment strewn all around on the Wülpensand, and many weapons also that none owned. They had slept so long that they could do the foe no further hurt.

When they told Wate, he was heavy of his cheer. Bitterly he bewailed King Hetel's death, and that he had not avenged it on Ludwig's body. Many helmets lay broken that fair women wept for at home.

How wroth was Ortwin, and how piteously he mourned for his good knights! "Up heroes!" he cried, that haply we may overtake them or they quit their camp. They cannot be far off."

Old Wate had gladly obeyed, but Frute began to peer through the air and said to the knights, "What availeth your haste? They be full thirty miles away. Besides, if we gave chase we have not enough folk to hurt them. Scorn not my counsel, and consider the matter no more, for ye shall never win to them.

Bid the wounded be carried to the ships, and seek out our dead that we may bury them on the wild coast. They have many friends here. Wherefore should they not profit thereby?"

They stood all together and wrung their hands. It had been scathe enow to lose the young princess, and what news could they bring home now to Queen Hilda?

Said Sir Morunc, "Were it only that we ourselves have suffered pain and heart's sorrow! Poor gifts shall we earn when we bring word that Hetel lieth slain; I had liefer bide away from Queen Hilda."

Then they sought out the dead on the beach. The knight of Sturmland bade them carry all the Christians to one place, and took counsel with the young men where they should lay them.

"Let us bury them," said Sir Ortwin, "and then consider how their memory may be made to endure *after death by means of a rich cloister, to which the kindred of each shall give a portion of their wealth.*"

"Thou hast well said," answered the knight of Sturmland. "Yea, let the horses and apparel of them that lie dead be sold, that the poor folk, at their life's end, may have profit from their goods."

Then spake Sir Irolt: "Shall we bury them also that did us the hurt, or shall we let the ravens and the wild wolves of the island enjoy them?"

To which the older men replied with the counsel, that they should not leave one lying.

When they found the time after their many perils, they buried the king, that had died honourably on that shore through love of his kin. And for the men of each land they did the like, whatever his name. They laid the Moors by themselves; also the Hegeling

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knights. A place was likewise given to the Normans. They buried them all separate, both Christians and heathens.

They toiled without ceasing for six days, and rested not from their endeavour to bring the Hegelings from their sins and evil deeds into God's favour. So many Masses were read and sung that never in any land had God been served so well for men fallen in battle. Many priests, too, they left behind on that coast with the dead. And they that were to guard these, and that were afterwards called Hospitallers, must tarry also, and were bidden write down what was given them: three hundred gifts at the least. It was noised abroad how the cloister was founded. All that had left their kinsmen there gave their portion, woman and man, for the sake of the souls whose bodies they had buried. They grew so rich later that three hundred endowments fell to it.

Now God have mercy on them that lie there, and on all that dwell in that place! They that were whole on the Wülpensand went their ways, and each, after his trouble, came home to his lord's country.

At which word both young and old feared greatly. Never were king's men so sorrowful.

"Woe is me for this wrong!" cried the king's wife. "Great Hetel my lord is gone from me. How is my glory fallen! I have lost them both! Gudrun I shall see nevermore."

Knights and maidens beat their breasts in measureless sorrow. The queen mourned so bitterly for her husband that the hall resounded.

"Woe is me," she cried, "if this be not avenged on King Hartmut!"

Then spake bold Wate: "Cease from wailing, O Queen, for they will not come again. Nevertheless hereafter, when the children of this land be grown to men, we will take vengeance to the full on Ludwig and Hartmut."

"Might I but live till that day!" said the sorrowful woman, "I would give all that I have could I be avenged and see Gudrun my daughter; poor God-forsaken one, that I am!"

"Give over weeping," answered Wate. "We will send out within the next twelve days to as many knights as we can bring together, and arrange how we shall wage war. It will go ill with them of Normandy. The cause of all our woe is this: I took nine ships from pilgrims. We will restore these to the poor folk, that, if we fight again, we may have better fortune."

"Let this be done," said the sorrowful woman, "that their loss be made good. Whoso taketh aught from pilgrims committeth a great sin. For each mark that was taken they shall have three of my silver." So they took back their ships as their mistress counselled. Or any pilgrim sailed from that shore, they were all so well paid that they cursed

none, and the daughter of wild Hagen was void of reproach.

The next morning bold Herwig of Zealand came to Hilda, that he found weeping bitterly after her husband's death. Yet she received the young knight kindly, albeit with wringing of hands.

From the weeping of the queen noble Herwig's eyes began to drop tears, and the young man said, "They be not all dead that should help thee, and did it gladly: by reason whereof some of the foemen have paid dear. I will never rest, soul or body, till Hartmut suffer for it, that he hath dared to carry off my wife, and to slay our warriors. I will ride up close to him yet, and sit in his castle."

Albeit loath to ride to Matelâne, the knights came thither, and the queen prayed them that were true not to shun her because of the woe that had befallen her. The men of Friesland came, and the men of Sturmland. The Danes also she had summoned. Morunc's knights rode from Waleis, and the Hegelings with them, to the castle of fair Hilda. Her son Ortwin rode from Ortland, and they mourned his dear father together, as was meet.

The heroes took counsel with their queen privily, and resolved on war. But old Wate said, "It cannot be till the noble orphans, now children, are able to bear swords. They will think on their kinsmen and help us gladly in the undertaking." "When will that be?" answered Hilda. "If my daughter must dwell yonder in a strange land still captive to foemen, then shall I, a poor queen, rejoice nevermore."

"If the enemy is to suffer sore scathe," said Frute of Denmark, "it cannot be or we have folk enow to ride hence to battle."

"God grant we live till then," answered the queen.

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"To me, an unhappy woman, ye give a long day of waiting. Whoso remembereth me and poor Gudrun will pity us, I trow."

They asked leave to depart, and the queen said, "Blessed be his body that is mindful of me. Till the time come round, ride hither, bold knights, nothing loath, and make ready for this war the best ye can."

Then old Wate, the good warrior, gave this wise counsel: "Let them hie to the Westerwalt. Since we purpose going to war, let each land give us forty ships."

She answered, "I will have twenty strong vessels, staunch and good, builded by the sea, and will so fit them that they will bear my friends in comfort to the foe."

So they parted.

The Prince of the Moors went courteously to the queen and said, "Let them tell me when they will forth, that none need be sent for me."

On friendly wise she bade them all farewell. The valiant guests and the fair women were seen mourning for their loss, and ceased not to plan such devices as the Normans dreamed not of.

When they had ridden back to their homes with sorrowful mien, Queen Hilda, that was very wise, sent food to them that prayed on the Wülpensand, that they might remember them before God. And to that end she bade a vast minster be builded, and then a cloister and hospital. It was known in many a land through the dead that lay there, and was called in after days the cloister of the Wülpensand.

shall I incline my heart? From him that hath my love I am now so far removed that in woe I must abide for evermore."

"Grieve not for that," answered Ludwig. "If thou wed Hartmut, the good warrior, we will offer thee all that is ours, and thou shalt enjoy both honour and bliss with him."

But Hilda's daughter said, "Why wilt thou not leave me in peace? I had liefer die than take Hartmut: if, through his father, he be not nobly born enow to wed me, I will lose my life sooner than take him to my husband."

King Ludwig was wroth at her word; he caught her by the hair, and threw her into the sea.

How swift the bold Hartmut came between them, and saved the damsel from the angry waves! He drew nigh when she would have sunk. She would have been drowned, but that the good knight reached her golden head with his hands and drew her out: else she had surely perished. Ludwig could be grim enough with fair maidens.

Hartmut drew her into the vessel, and she sat there in her shift when he had taken her from the waves. She was a stranger to such handling. Ah, sorrowful were her thoughts!

Then the beautiful maidens wept all together, and none was glad. What worse could befall them than that a king's daughter should be so evilly entreated? But in their hearts they thought, "They will do us still further hurt."

Sir Hartmut asked, "Wherefore wouldst they have drowned my wife? She is to me as my own body. Had it been any other than Ludwig, my father, I had taken both his honour and his life."

"I have grown to be old unbanned," Ludwig

answered, "and would live with honour till my end. Forbid Gudrun to flout me."

The envoys reached their home in merry mood, and commended the service of her son Hartmut to Queen Gerlint, with all that was kind and loving, and begged her to welcome many valiant knights on the shore. Hartmut bade them tell her also that the Hegeling maiden whom he had often yearned for, sorrowing, or ever he saw her, was come across the sea. Gerlint was never better pleased, I ween, than when she heard it.

"And Queen," said the bold envoys further, "Thou shalt go down from the castle to welcome the maiden in her sorrow with a friendly greeting. Thou and thy daughter shall both ride to the beach. Thou shalt also take damsels and women and good knights with thee down to the sea, where the stranger is waiting in the haven. With a kind welcome shalt thou receive her folk."

"I will do it gladly," answered Gerlint. "I rejoice greatly that Hetel's child is come hither to this land with her maidens. I shall often see Hartmut merry beside her yet."

They bade them bring out the horses and the saddle-cloths. The young princess was merry and glad because she was about to see in her father's country Gudrun whose praise she had often heard.

So they sought in the chests for the best apparel that was therein (none had better), and bade them array Hartmut's knights with care. The king's household rode forth from the castle gaily adorned.

On the third morning all the men and women that Gerlint had brought together for her escort were ready for the joyful welcome. Whereupon they rode down from the castle and hastened from the court.

The guests were now come into the harbour, and all they had brought with them was carried down from the ships. They returned merrily to their home. Only Gudrun and her maidens were sorrowful.

Bold Hartmut led her by the hand, which she had gladly been spared as she could. The wretched maiden only took his service for honour's sake; whereas this and whatsoever he could do for her, he did gladly.

Full sixty damsels followed her, and these bare them as they had left their land with proud observance, and not as captives. They had once been highly esteemed in many a king's land, but now they knew sorrow without joy.

Hartmut's sister drew nigh between two princes, and welcomed Hilda's daughter sweetly. The host's daughter kissed the homeless maiden with tearful eyes, and took hold of her white hands.

Ludwig's wife would have kissed her also, but Gudrun was wroth and said to her, "Why comest thou so close? I will not kiss thee, nor shalt thou greet me. It is through thy counsel that I, a wretched maiden, have suffered so much heart's sorrow and shame in my perilous fortunes. And worse, alack! is yet to come."

Thereupon the queen strove hard to win her favour. She welcomed all the damsels one by one.

Then came a great multitude with loud din, and many tents with silk cords were pitched on the shore for Hartmut and his men. There was little rest for any till they had brought their spoil from off the sea.

Gudrun was heavy of her cheer to have the Normans beside her folk. She bare her sweetly to none save Ortrun. All that day they must tarry on the beach, and whatever others did, her eyes were seen full of tears; they and her bright cheeks were never

dry. Oft-times Hartmut sought to comfort her, but her sorrow endured long.

Ortrun was free of all guile towards the virtuous maiden. However the rest used her, she liked well to be beside her, and strove to make her father's land dear to her. But the poor princess grieved and mourned for her friends.

Knights and squires found their folk merry at home, as was meet, when they showed what they had brought back from the Hegelings. How gladly they welcomed them, that had not thought to see them there again!

When they had rested from their wild sea journey, Hartmut's men betook them to all ends of the kingdom, leaving the folk there to do as they would. Some were seen laughing; some wringing their hands.

Sir Hartmut likewise left that place, and brought Gudrun to a goodly castle, where the maiden must needs tarry longer than she had a mind to, and where she endured much sorrow and heaviness.

When the noble damsel, that they thought to crown here, was in the castle, the host bade them see to it that they all served her diligently, whence it came that none of them failed to enrich her with their gifts.

Then said Gerlint, Ludwig's wife, "When shall Gudrun hold Hartmut, the young and mighty king, in her arms? He is equal to her in all things, and she hath no cause to complain."

When Gudrun, the noble maiden, heard this she answered, "Queen Gerlint, it might well grieve thyself, if any forced thee to take a man through whom thou hadst lost so many kinsmen; yea, it might irk thee to serve him."

"It boots not to mourn for what is beyond all help," answered the king's wife. "Wed him, and I

swear by my head that I will never cease to make it good to thee. If thou consent to be queen, I will gladly give thee my crown."

"That I will never wear," said the wrathful maiden. "Thou needest not to tell me of his great possessions, thinking that I will ever wed the knight. I desire not to tarry here, and desire daily to be gone."

This word grieved Sir Hartmut, who deemed it ill said, and cried, "If I win not the noble maiden, she shall find little love on my side."

Whereupon wicked Gerlint said to him, "Wise folk must teach foolish children. If thou leave her to me, I trow she will abate her pride."

"I am willing," Hartmut answered, "that thou shouldst instruct the good maiden according to thine honour and hers, however it fare with me. But she is a stranger here; wherefore, O Queen, teach her gently."

So the young king, or he departed, left fair Gudrun in the charge of his mother, which irked the princess sore, and for all Gerlint could do, her lessons were little liked.

Then said the she-devil, "If thou wilt not have joy, thou shalt have sorrow. Look around thee. Who is there to help thee? Thou shalt heat my chamber, and see to the fire thyself."

The noble maiden answered, "That I can do right well, even all that thou commandest, till God in heaven end my misery; albeit my mother's daughter hath not been used to tend the fire."

Said Gerlint, "If I live, thou shalt begin to do much that other kings' daughters have done seldom. Thou shalt suffer for thy pride. Or to-morrow night thou shalt be parted from thy maidens. Thou deemest thyself of great worth, as I hear, and by reason thereof

shall thy labour be the harder. I will make thee rue thy grim temper, for I will end thy hopes and abase thee."

Wicked Gerlint went angrily to the court and said to Hartmut, "Hetel's daughter so scorneth thee and thy friends that sooner than hearken to her I would I had never seen her."

But Hartmut answered his mother, "However the maiden demean her, O Queen, entreat her kindly, that I may thank thee. I have done her such hurt that she may well turn from my service."

"No matter what any doeth to her," said the queen, "she obeyeth none. Her mind is such that, unless she be subdued with harshness, she will never be thy wife, as it behoveth her; and harshness I will use sooner than that thou shouldst not win her."

But the good Knight of Normandy said, "Entreat her and instruct her on such wise that thy faith may be shown, and that the princess become not utterly my foe."

Then the wicked she-devil went wrathfully back to the Hegeling maidens and said, "Get ye to work. What I bid ye do let none leave undone."

So the fair damsels were parted and lived for long as strangers. They that might have been the wives of mighty lords were forced to wind yarn and abode there in great misery. Some had to spin and some to comb out the flax, albeit they were come thither from high places. Any that could broider silk with gold and precious stones had little ease.

She that should have been first among them at court was forced to see to it that the maidens carried water to Ortrun's chamber. She was called Hergart, and drew small profit from her noble birth. There was also one among them from Galicia that evil

fortune had driven from Portugal. She came from Ireland with Hagen's daughter to the Hegelings; and was afterwards among the damsels in Normandy. She was the daughter of a prince that had castles and land, yet she was forced to kindle the fire with her white hands when Gerlint's women went into their apartment; nor did they thank her for her service.

Now hear this wonder of their great woe. The work that the lowest of Gerlint's women bade them do they must accomplish. They profited little by their noble kinsmen there in Normandy. In good sooth I tell you that the maidens must perform the basest offices for three and a half years, till Hartmut returned to his land after three wars. All that time the orphans served.

When Hartmut bade them show him his dear one, it was easy to see that she had seldom had comfort or good meat. They made her suffer because she lived virtuously.

As she went towards him the young king said, "Gudrun, fair princess, how hath it fared with thee since I and my good knights left the country?"

"I have been forced to do servants' work," she answered, "to thy sin and my shame."

Whereupon Hartmut cried, "Wherefore hast thou done this, Gerlint, dear mother? I commended her to thy grace, that her great misery in this land might be lightened by all manner of kindness."

But the she-wolf said, "How better could I teach Hetel's daughter? Know this, that for all I could beg and bid, I could not win her to speak aught but scornfully of thee and thy father and thy kinsmen."

But Hartmut answered, "Great sorrow hath driven her thereto. We slew so many knights among her kin,

Then his friends counselled him to force the lovely maiden to his will by any means he could, whether his mother liked it or no; that so he might yet live to enjoy many a happy hour with the woman.

So he went and found her in a chamber, and took her by the hand.

"High and noble maiden," he said, "wed me and be a queen. My knights shall serve thee well."

But Gudrun answered, "I have no heart thereto. Wicked Gerlint hath done me such wrong that I desire the love of no hero. I hate thee and thy kin with all my soul."

"That grieveth me," said Hartmut. "If by service I may attain thereto, I will make good, as beseemeth my honour, what my mother Gerlint hath done to thy hurt."

"I will never trust thee more," answered the noble maiden.

Then said young Hartmut of Normandy, "Thou knowest well, Gudrun, that the land and the castles and all the folk are subject to me. Who would hang me, if I won thee to my leman?"

"I would call it ill done," answered Hetel's daughter. "That fear hath not troubled me. Other princes would have somewhat to say, when they heard that one of Hagen's kin was a leman in Hartmut's land."

"What need I care what they say?" cried Hartmut. "If thou thyself willed well, I should be king, and thou queen."

But she answered, "Have no fear. I will never wed thee. Thou knowest well, Sir Hartmut, what I suffered from thy might when thou tookest me captive and bare me away, and the hurt thy knights did to my father's men. Thou knowest too (and heavy

enow am I by reason thereof) that thy father Ludwig slew my father. If I were a knight he durst not approach me without weapons. Why then should I sleep by thy side?"

At that time it was the custom that no woman took a man, save they both willed it; which did honour unto all.

Beautiful Gudrun mourned bitterly for her father, so Sir Hartmut spake in wrath: "I care little how they use thee, since thou wilt not wear the crown by me. Thou findest what thou seekest, and hast it daily to thy reward."

"I will earn my wages as I have done heretofore. The work that I can do for Hartmut's men and Gerlint's women I will do gladly, since God hath forgotten me. I am beset with many woes."

They essayed it further, and bade fair. Ortrun to the court, that she and her maidens might bring poor Gudrun to a better mind by gentleness.

To her Sir Hartmut said openly, "I will make thee rich, my sister, if thou help me to teach Gudrun to forget her great wrong, and to cease from mourning it so bitterly."

Young Ortrun of Normandy answered him, "I and all these that are with me will ever serve her, that she may forget her sorrow. I will bow my head before her. I and my maidens will always serve her, as we were her vassals."

Whereupon Gudrun thanked her, saying, "I reward thee with true-hearted love for thy desire to see me crowned by Hartmut's side, and living in honour. Nevertheless that I am far from home weigheth on my heart."

TWENTY-FIRST ADVENTURE

HOW GUDRUN HAD TO WASH CLOTHES

THEY offered Gudrun castles and land, and when she would have none of them, they made her wash daily from morning till night; by reason whereof Ludwig was beaten in battle when he fought with Herwig.

They bade Gudrun rise from where she sat, and go with Ortrun to rest and drink good wine, but the homeless one said, "I will not be thy queen. Whatever be thy desire in the matter, Sir Hartmut, thou knowest well that I was plighted with a binding oath to a king to be his wife; and except he die, I will never take another knight to my husband."

"Thy yearning will avail thee little," answered Sir Hartmut. "None shall part us save death. Abide as a friend by my sister; she will lighten thy sorrow. I can trust her for that."

Hartmut thought that her steadfast sorrow would be eased, if his sister shared with her all that she had. They both hoped that they might win her yet.

Gudrun greeted them that served her, and her face was soon rosy-red with wine and with meat, of which she had plenty. Ortrun sat beside her. Yet when the king spake her fair and kindly the poor maiden was not wise enough to let it atone, and to forget what she and her maidens had endured in a strange land.

She avenged her wrong on Hartmut with hard

words, till he was weary, and said, "Princess Gudrun, I am at least the equal of Prince Herwig, that thou didst think it an honour to take to thy friend. Thou chidest me too often and too bitterly. If thou gavest over it were well for us both. I am grieved beyond measure when any do thee hurt, or make thee heavy of heart and soul. However thou hatest me I would gladly make thee queen."

Whereupon Hartmut sent forth and bade his men guard his land and honour well; for he thought to himself, "I am so bitterly hated that I must watch lest evil befall me."

Then wicked Gerlint bade Gudrun wait upon her, and seldom let her rest on a seat. She that should have been sought for among kings' children, was found here among the lowest.

The old she-wolf said to her grimly, "I will have Hilda's daughter to my servant. Since she is so steadfast in hate, she shall serve me as she never did afore."

"All that I can do with my will and with my hands, night and day, I will do diligently," the maiden answered, "since cruel fate suffereth me not to be with my friends."

"Thou shalt carry down my clothes daily to the beach," said wicked Gerlint, "and shalt wash them for me and my folk, taking heed not to be found a moment idle."

"Great wife of a king," Gudrun answered, "let someone teach my body skill to wash thy clothes. Since I may not have joy, I would have thee use me still worse. If I must wash, let them show me the way. I esteem myself not too mighty to do it, since I may earn my bread thereby. I will refuse my service to none."

Gudrun was very wise.

So she bade a washerwoman, that was to teach her, carry the clothes down to the shore, and now she began, for the first time, to serve in bitter sorrow. There was none to hinder when Gerlint tormented high-born Gudrun. They taught her before Ludwig's castle, and she toiled so well for the heroes that none could wash clothes better in Normandy.

Her maidens had never been so downcast as when they saw her working on the shore. There was one among them that was also a king's daughter. What the rest mourned for was but as wind compared with her wrong. It grieved them all bitterly when they beheld their royal mistress washing on the beach.

Then said the damsel Hildeburg with true heart, "Well may they rue it that came hither with Gudrun to this land. To God be their cry. They need not look for rest, since she herself standeth washing on the shore."

Gerlint heard her, and said angrily, "If thou wouldst not have thy mistress do this work, thou mayest serve in her stead."

"I would gladly do it, if I durst," answered Hildeburg. "For the sake of Almighty God, Queen Gerlint, leave her not alone. She is a king's daughter. My father also wore a crown. I will hold to my word; let me wash beside her for good or ill. I pity her sore because of the high honour that God gave her, albeit I myself am in evil case. The mightiest kings of old were her fathers. Unseemly is her service here, yet I will account it no hardship to be beside her."

"Many a time shalt thou suffer for this," cried wicked Gerlint. "However hard the winter, thou shalt out on the snow, and wash the clothes in the

cold wind, till thou wouldst gladly be found in the warm chamber."

Hildeburg could scarce wait till it was dusk. When she went to Gudrun in the room where she was, the noble maiden found some comfort, and together they wailed bitterly over their grievous task.

"Deeply I mourn thy sorrowful plight," said Hildeburg weeping. "I have prayed the she-devil that she force thee not to wash alone on the beach. I will bear the burden with thee."

"Christ reward thee that thou sorrowest for my woe," answered the homeless one. "If thou wash beside me it will give me some joy, and speed the time. We shall also be the merrier of our cheer."

When Hildeburg had won leave to carry clothes down to the shore with the joy-bereaved one in her misery, whatever the others did, these two must wash without cease. When the other maidens had the time, they wept bitterly to see them standing and washing on the beach. Sore they grieved, although none in the world had a harder lot than they themselves.

For five and a half years—I say sooth—they must wash and make white the raiment of Hartmut's warriors. Never were women worse bested. They stood before the castle in miserable case.

TWENTY-SECOND ADVENTURE

HOW HILDA SENT AN ARMY AFTER HER DAUGHTER

Now let us turn from this matter of how they served the men and the women there.

All these years Queen Hilda had pondered how she might win back her dear daughter from Normandy. She had built seven strong and good vessels and twenty freight ships, good and rich, well equipped with all they had need of. She had forty galleys on the water, that were the delight of her eye, and she waited for the army she was to send. She had gotten the food for it where she could, and her knights she rewarded on such wise that all must praise her.

At last the time drew nigh when they purposed, without tarrying longer, to cross the sea after her that endured bitter woe in a strange land. So fair Hilda bade her envoys be well furnished with raiment. It was Christmastide, and she named the day to them that were to avenge Hetel's death. She sent word to all her friends and vassals, that they should bring back her dear daughter from Normandy.

She dispatched her envoys to Herwig first, to mind him how he and his men had sworn to make war on them that had left many a noble orphan among the Hegelings.

So they spurred into Herwig's country, that knew

well why they were come, and went towards them with a friendly greeting, when they gave him Hilda's message.

"Thou knowest well, O King, how the matter standeth, and what was sworn in the Hegeling land. Queen Hilda troweth thee readier thereto than any other, for none hath more cause to pity Gudrun among strangers."

"I know how it standeth," answered the noble knight: "how wickedly Hartmut took my dear one captive, because she would none of him, and chose me for her friend, and how, by reason thereof, she lost her father Hetel. Commend my service to Hilda, good envoys. I will never forgive Hartmut that he hath held my betrothed so long in bondage. I, more than any, long for this work. Tell her and her knights that six-and-twenty days after Christmas I will ride to the Hegelings with three thousand men."

So Hilda's envoys tarried there no longer, but went their way.

Thereupon Herwig, intent on battle, made ready with them that had often done valiantly aforetime. He equipped for the journey all that were minded to follow him and fight beside him in the cruel midwinter.

Fair Hilda needed help and sent word to her friends in Denmark, praying them to ride to Normandy after Gudrun, and to tarry no longer. She bade Horant remember that he and his men were of the king's kin, and prayed him to have pity on her dear daughter, that would sooner perish than lie in Hartmut's arms.

"Tell Queen Hilda," answered the bold knight, "that I will make it good with many a woman's tears. I and all my knights will go to her gladly.

Many a mother's child will yet be heard weeping in that land. And tell the queen, further, that I will come to her shortly, and that I have so good a heart to this war that I will bring ten thousand of my knights from Denmark."

The envoys took their leave then and went to the march of Waleis, where they found Morunc, the mighty margrave, with his men, that saw them gladly and received them right graciously.

Said Sir Irolt, "Since I am desired to ride to the Hegelings in seven weeks with as many knights as I can bring, I will do it readily, no matter how it fall out for me and my warriors."

Then Morunc sent word to the valiant men of the Holstein land, that Hilda had summoned her friends to go to war. And when they told the news to bold Frute of Denmark the good knight answered, "I will gladly go to win back Gudrun. It is thirteen years since we sware to go against the Normans, and Hartmut's friends sailed away from us with the maiden."

Wate, the knight of Sturmland, was willing also, and brought help. Although the envoys of the queen of the Hegelings brought him no message, he made all haste to bring together as many knights as he could.

So they all bestirred them for the journey. Wate of Sturmland was soon ready with his vassals and kinsmen, to the number of full a thousand warriors, to go against Hartmut of Normandy.

The homeless maidens were ill-cared for by Gerlint, save Hergart (one of them was thus named) that loved the king's cupbearer, and desired to become a great duchess.

Hilda's child often wept by reason thereof, and

the maid herself paid dear for it thereafter, that she would not endure their hardship with them; but for what befell her then Gudrun cared little.

The Hegeling folk were not idle, as I have said. Yet the work went not rightly forward till the knights agreed to send for Gudrun's brother.

The envoys rode in haste to Ortland, where they found the youth on the plain by a broad river rich in birds. The king hawked there skilfully with his falconer.

He saw the envoys spurring towards him, and said straightway, "Valiant knights, yonder come folk riding that Hilda my mother hath sent. She thinketh we have forgotten the war that was sworn."

He let the falcons fly away, and rode swiftly where he heard news or long that made him heavy of his cheer. He greeted the envoys, that delayed not to tell him that Hilda was found always weeping.

They commended to him her true and loving service, and asked his mind, and whether he would bring his knights to her help, for they purposed going from the Hegeling land against the Normans.

"Thou sayest rightly," answered Sir Ortwin. "I will bring a great host of good warriors, to the number of twenty thousand men. I will lead them thither, though not one of them win back alive."

Then they that Queen Hilda had summoned were seen riding into the country from all quarters. They made haste to serve her, as befitted their honour. They that flocked to her were sixty thousand or more.

Morune of Waleis had sixty staunch and goodly ships on the water, and came with as many men as these would carry across the sea to the Hegelings, to bring back Gudrun.

From Nortland, also, they brought rich vessels.

All was in battle trim—their horses, their raiment, their helmets and their swords; they drew nigh in knightly array.

They reckoned by the shields how many were come to help fair Hilda to bring her noble daughter back from Normandy, and found them seventy thousand. To these Queen Hilda gave costly gifts.

The joyless woman failed not to meet and to welcome, one by one, both them that were already there, and them that still came, and gave to the chosen knights many wonderful garments.

Her ships were so fully equipped that the valiant guests had been able to start any morning; yet they would not go till there was no lack therein at all.

Hilda bade the weapons be carried on board, and the good helmets, inlaid with steel. She gave the knights, beyond what they had, white coats of mail for five hundred men.

Their cables were of strong and goodly silk, and very rich were the sails wherewith the warriors that sought to bring back Gudrun to Queen Hilda crossed the sea to Normandy from the Hegeling land. Their anchors were not of iron, but of bell-metal, so they tell us, and bound with Spanish brass, that the magnetic rocks might not imperil the goodly heroes.

Fair Hilda gave bracelets freely to Wate and his men, that paid her by the death of many warriors, when they brought back the lovely maiden from Hartmut's castle.

Then the queen began to exhort the Danes: "For what ye have done before in grim battle ye shall be rewarded with honour. Follow my standard-bearer and he will lead you aright."

They asked who this was, and she told them, "Horant, the knight of Denmark, whose mother was

great Hetel's sister. Ye shall trust to him, nor swerve from him in the fight. Neither forget, O valiant heroes, my dear son, for with his twenty years he hath hardly grown to be a man yet. If he come in danger through any, help him thence."

They all gave their word to do this, were they at hand, and promised that, if he followed them, he would win scatheless home again; which it angered not young Ortwin to hear.

The marvel of all they brought and carried to the ships none could tell you to the end. Then they took their leave, that they might win to their work, and beautiful Hilda prayed all-powerful Christ in Heaven to go before them. The fathers of many of them had been slain, and the true-hearted orphans would not suffer their wrong. Women enow among the Hege-lings wept, knowing not whether God would ever restore their dear children.

But they could not endure so much weeping, nor would they let the folk wail any longer. They departed with sounds of joy, and with the noise of trumpets, and the good knights were heard singing as they went down to the ships.

When they had taken their leave and begun their journey, many women were seen standing in the windows, that followed them as far as they could with their eyes from the castle at Matelâne.

Their masts creaked, and a favouring wind arose. The sails filled, and many a mother's son journeyed in the hope to win honour; and honour enow came to his hand, but to attain thereto he must needs labour sore.

I know not in sooth all that happened by the voyage, save that the King of Karadê sailed thither, and met them with his men. He brought with him

full ten thousand warriors, famed throughout their country.

On the Wülpensand, where the battle was fought aforetime, they resolved to hold a meeting of the folk of every land. The cloister there was rich, for old and young gave their wealth to it.

They that went ashore from the harbour came back so sorrowful from the graves of their fathers that it was the worse for them that had slain them in battle.

They welcomed the King of the Moors, who brought four-and-twenty vessels full of folk, and meats also in such plenty that they had not lacked in twenty years. They were fain to work woe to the Normans.

So they sailed thence on their ships as best they could, but fared ill afterwards on the wide waters. What availed it then that old Wate and Frute of Denmark were their guides?

There came a south wind that drove the noble company out to the open sea, that with a thousand anchor ropes they had not found the bottom. Right heavy were they of their cheer, and the best mariners began to weep. Hilda's host lay before the hill of Givers. Albeit their anchors were stout, magnetic rocks had drawn them thither across the dark ocean, and all their good masts were bowed.

When they wept piteously old Wate said, "Cast anchor in the bottomless waves. I have heard tell of many a place where I would sooner be than here, but since the queen's army hath drifted hither, and we be come so far on the dark water, I will tell you, for your comfort, how, from a child, I have heard this fable of the sea: that inside the mountain of Givers was a mighty kingdom. So rich was their country that, where the rivers were lost in the waves,

the sand was of silver, wherewith they builded their castles; and the stones were of the purest gold. Certes, the folk there were not poor.

"More I have heard (for God worketh many wonders): how that, if the magnetic rocks draw any to the mountain, and he can wait till the wind changeth, he and all his kin will be rich for evermore. Let us eat now, and perchance all will go well with us, and we shall fill our good ships full of precious stones, that, if we return therewith to our country, we may sit merrily at home."

But Frute of Denmark answered, "Sooner than lie miserably becalmed here with my fellow voyagers I would swear with a thousand oaths never to win wealth, might I escape from before this mountain with a good wind."

The Christians among them said their prayers; but when the vessel had stood fast there in one spot four days and more, the Hegelings feared greatly that they would never win thence.

Then the clouds lightened as God had ordained, and the waves fell, and they were delivered from their peril. Through the great darkness they saw the sun; a west wind arose, and their travail was ended.

The wind blew them swiftly six-and-twenty miles away from the mountain of Givers; wherein the hand and the mercy of God were plainly seen. To the magnetic rocks Wate and his men were come all too nigh. They were now on the free-flowing waves, and had not suffered for their sins, wherefore they forgot a great part of their heaviness, for God had not punished them.

The ship had run straight to Normandy, and a new peril beset them, for the walls of the vessels cracked, and the ships tossed violently on the fierce waves.

Then said Sir Ortwin, "We buy our honour dear."

"Alack! Alack!" cried a mariner. "It were better to have lain dead before the mountain of Givers than to endure such woe! Who can save his life when God hath forgotten him? O valiant knights, the sea doth naught but rage and storm."

But bold Horant of Denmark cried, "Be of good cheer, ye warriors, for I know of a surety that this is a west wind and will hurt none."

The King of Karadê and his men were joyful at the news.

Bold Horant climbed to the mast-head and saw many waves. He cast his eyes far round on all sides and said, "We may take our ease, for we are close to Normandy."

So they bade all the host reef their sails. They saw before them a mountain in the sea, and on it a great forest, for which Wate counselled his men to steer.

TWENTY-THIRD ADVENTURE

HOW THEY CAME INTO THE HARBOUR AND REACHED NORMANDY

THEY sailed along below the mountain to this wood, moving warily, as they needs must, and dropped their anchors quickly to the bottom. They lay in a solitary place, that none might discover them.

Then they went ashore from the ships to rest. Ha, what things they found there!—cool fresh streams that flowed from the hill through the fir-wood, whereat the ocean-weary men rejoiced.

At the spot where the folk were to lie at ease, knight Irold climbed up an exceeding high tree, and spying eagerly whither they should go, beheld the land of Normandy.

"Now rejoice, ye youths," he cried; "my cares are vanished, for I see full seven rich palaces, and a hall long and large. To-morrow, or mid-day, we shall be in Normandy."

"Then let us carry ashore our swords and shields and harness," said wise Wate. "Or, if ye yourselves would rest, bid the squires do it. Let the horses be ridden, lest they be stiff with standing, and cause the straps of your harness and your helmets to be seen to. If there be any among you with harness that suiteth him not, let him come to me. Queen Hilda hath sent five hundred coats of mail hither with us, and these we will give to the kinsmen of good warriors."

So they brought the horses straightway on to the sand, and the knights and squires fitted on them whatever goodly horse-cloths and coverings they could find, each taking the one he deemed best. Then they bade the horses be put to the gallop, far up and down the shore, and they found many that were stiff, and could not leap. These had stood too long in the boats, and Wate gave order that they should straightway be killed.

The homeless strangers kindled their fires and made ready rich and good meats—the best that could be found by the shore—for they knew it would be long or they enjoyed ease again. And after this they rested the night through till the next day.

Then Wate and Frute went apart with the young king on the beach, and they took counsel together how to be revenged there, in their own country, on them that had destroyed their castles.

"Let us dispatch envoys," said Ortwin, "to win news of my sister and the homeless ones, if haply the maidens still live. My heart is often heavy when I think on them."

They cast about in their minds for a messenger that would bring them a true report of how it fared with the damsels, and that would also have the skill to hide the purpose of his questioning from the foe.

Then said Sir Ortwin of Ortland, that was a valiant knight, "I will be the envoy. Gudrun is my sister by the same father and mother. None in this company is so fit an envoy as I."

"And I will be the other," cried King Herwig, "and will live or die by thee. If the maid was thy sister, to me she was given to wife, and every day of my life I will serve her."

But Wate answered wrathfully, "That were a

childish device, chosen knights; with true heart I counsel you to forgo it. Scorn not my warning, for, if Hartmut discover you, he will have you hanged on a gallows."

"Go it well or ill with us," said King Herwig, "I and Ortwin, my kinsman, will not give over till we have found Gudrun, befall us what will, since it is meet that friend stand by friend."

Seeing that naught would serve them but to go as envoys, they summoned their kinsmen and vassals, and exhorted them nevermore to forget the fealty they had sworn with their holiest oaths towards both the bold knights.

"I charge you by your honour that ye free us with your wealth, grieving not to sell land and castles to that end, if we be discovered and taken captive. And mark, good warriors, what we tell you further. If they grudge us our lives, or we be slain, forget not, as dauntless heroes, to avenge your loss with swords in Hartmut's land. And more than this we beseech of you: that, whatever the cost, ye cease not from battle, till ye have saved the homeless women, for all their hope is in you."

The noblest among them promised the princes, and gave their hand on it, that they would never care to see their own country again, if they brought not the homeless maidens back with them out of Normandy. They that were true wept because they might not send some other envoys, for greatly they feared Ludwig's hate, and they all thought, "Now none can hinder their death."

They had debated on this matter all the day, and the light of the sun lay hidden behind clouds far off in Gulstrat. Wherefore Ortwin and Sir Herwig must tarry there for that night.

TWENTY-FOURTH ADVENTURE

HOW GUDRUN HEARD OF THEIR COMING

Now keep we silent concerning the knights, and I will tell you how they that had a right to joy must needs toil in a foreign land. All day long Gudrun and Hildeburg stood on the shore washing.

It fell in a season of fast, about mid-day, that a bird swam towards them, and Gudrun, the noble maiden, said, "Alack, beautiful bird, I pity thee, that thou must float so long on these waves."

Whereupon God's high angel began to answer her with a human voice, as it had been a man: "I am a messenger to thee from God, and if thou ask me, royal maiden, I will tell thee concerning all thy kinsmen."

When the damsel heard this, she would not believe that a wild bird could speak; she heard his voice like as it came out of a man's mouth.

Then said the high angel, "Be of good hope, noble maiden, for great joy shall befall thee. If thou question me concerning the land of thy kindred, I will be thy envoy, for God hath sent me hither to comfort thee."

Gudrun fell down on the sands, as she had said her *venia* to God with her arms outstretched in the form of a cross.

Then she cried to Hildeburg, "Blessed are we in that God hath vouchsafed us this honour. Now shall we sorrow no more.

"Since Christ hath sent thee to comfort us that be strangers in this land," said the God-forsaken one, "tell me, good envoy, whether Hilda yet liveth that was the mother of poor Gudrun."

"I will tell thee," answered the heavenly messenger. "I saw Hilda thy mother whole and well, what time she dispatched hither the greatest host that widow or kinsman ever sent forth for the sake of a dear friend."

"Envoy most high," said the royal maiden, "be not wroth if I ask thee further. Liveth Ortwin, the King of Ortland: and likewise Herwig, my dear one? For this I would gladly learn."

"I will inform thee concerning them," the angel answered. "Ortwin and Herwig are alive. I saw them on the face of the waters, where the valiant knights pulled each at an oar."

"Tell me also, heavenly envoy," she said, "if Irolt and Morunc come hither; that I would fain know, for they were the kinsmen of my father Hetel."

The messenger answered, "Of that I can assure thee. I have seen Irolt and Morunc, that serve you both, O fair women! with good will. Win they to this land, they will cleave many helmets."

Said the high angel then, "I must away, for I have much to do. God guard your honour. To say more goeth beyond mine instructions."

He vanished from before their eyes, whereat the damsels wept bitterly.

Hilda's daughter said, "I must grieve beyond measure that what I would have asked is hidden from me. I pray thee for Christ's sake to deliver me, the

unhappy daughter of a king, of my woe or thou leave me."

He swayed to and fro before her eyes, and said again, "Or thou and I part I will gladly serve thee wherein I can. Since thou hast asked it for Christ's sake, I will give thee news of all thy kinsmen."

"If thou hast heard aught thereof, I would gladly learn whether Horant of Denmark cometh with his knights, that left me in woeful case. Him I know for so valiant a man that he might well save me, wretched maiden that I am."

"Horant of Denmark, thy kinsman, cometh with his warriors to wage grim war. Hilda's banner he will bear in his hand, when the Hegelings come into Hartmut's country."

Gudrun asked further, "Canst thou tell me if Wate of Sturmland yet liveth. I were little loath to hear it; and to see old Frute by my mother's standard would rejoice us all."

The angel answered, "Wate of Sturmland cometh; he hath in his hand a strong oar in a boat beside Frute. Better friends in battle need none desire."

Thereupon the angel made as to depart, but the God-forsaken one said, "I am still troubled, and would fain know when I, a poor homeless one, shall see the envoys of Hilda, my mother."

"Thy joy draweth nigh," answered the angel. "To-morrow early two envoys will come to thee. They are so trusty that they will not deceive thee, nor bring thee any lying news."

Thereupon the heavenly messenger left them, and the homeless women questioned no more. Both glad and sorrowful were their thoughts, for they knew not where the brave men were that should deliver them.

So it fell that they washed the clothes that day so much the slower, and spake of the heroes that great Hilda had sent from the Hegelings; with doubt and longing the maidens awaited Gudrun's kinsmen.

The light was gone, and the desolate ones must needs home; whereupon wicked Gerlint was wroth, and upbraided them, as was her wont with the high-born damsels.

She said to them, "Who counselled you to wash the linen and the other raiment so slow? Ye linger too long over the cleaning of my white silk, and if ye mend not your ways, I trow there be some that will weep for it."

Hildeburg answered, "We do the best we can, and, O Queen, thou didst well to show some pity, for often we freeze bitterly; were the winds warmer we could wash more."

But Gerlint cried angrily, "Ye shall not loiter for any weather, but shall wash my linen early and late. So soon as morning appeareth ye shall forth from my chambers. Ye have heard how that a high-tide draweth near. Palm Sunday is nigh, and there come to us guests, and if ye give not my knights their clothing clean, never in king's palace nor in the whole world will washewomen be in worse case."

So they went forth from her presence and laid from them the wet garments that they had on. They should have been better entreated, but no love was shown to them any more. Well might they sorrow, for their food was rye bread and water.

The wretched maidens lay down to sleep. Their bed was not soft; two black shifts was all they had on; on such wise wicked Gerlint cared for them. She let them lie without kisses on hard boards.

Uneasily lay poor Gudrun; they could scarce wait

for the dawn, and slept the less, I ween, for wondering whether the bird would bring good warriors into the land.

When the day brake, noble Hildeburg of Galicia, that had tossed all the night, went to a window and saw that snow was fallen, whereat the wretched maidens were heavy of their cheer.

The homeless one said, "We must go now to our work, and if we stand washing barefoot to-day by such weather, if God help us not, we may well be found dead before night."

Yet they rejoiced in the hope that on some wise or other they would see Hilda's messengers before evening; and when they thought on them that brought them solace and gladness, they were less heavy-hearted.

Said Hilda's daughter, "Friend, thou must entreat wicked Gerlint that she allow us to wear shoes in the snow; she can see for herself that if we go barefoot we must freeze to death."

They went to the king and his wife. Wicked Gerlint lay with her arm round Ludwig, and they were both asleep. They durst not wake them, whereat Gudrun was sorrowful.

But in her sleep Gerlint heard them stand wailing, and began to scold them saying, "Tell me why ye go not down to the beach to wash my clothes, that the water ye wring from them be clean."

"I know not how to win there," answered the homeless one. "A heavy snow hath fallen through the night, and except thou hinder it, we must die this day, if we have not shoes on our feet."

But the she-wolf cried, "Nay, certes; fair or foul, ye shall forth and wash hard, else will I make it the worse for you. What is your death to me?" Whereat

both the maidens wept, and took the clothes, and went their way.

"God grant that I may yet remind thee of this," cried Gudrun.

They ran through the snow with their bare feet. Bitter to the noble maidens was their exile. They went on to the sand, as they were wont, and washed the garments that they had carried down there. Little profit had they as yet of their high hopes.

Many a time they looked longingly out over the sea, marvelling whence the good envoys would come, that the great queen had sent to their help from the land of Gudrun's father.

TWENTY-FIFTH ADVENTURE

HOW ORTWIN AND HERWIG ARRIVED

WHEN they had looked for a long time they saw two men in a boat on the waves, and none beside.

Then Hildeburg said to high-born Gudrun, "I see two men sailing yonder that might be thy envoys."

But the sorrowful one answered, "Woe is me, wretched maiden that I am! My sorrow and my joy are alike deep. If they be Hilda's messengers and find me washing here on the beach, I could never endure the shame. I am a poor God-forsaken one, and know not what to do. Counsel me, dear friend Hildeburg. Shall I flee, or let them find me thus abased? I were liefer a servant evermore."

"Thou seest well how the thing standeth," answered Hildeburg, "nor shouldst bid me counsel thee on so high a matter. I will do whatsoever thou doest, and share both evil and good with thee."

At this they both turned and went away. But the two men were come so nigh that they saw the fair washerwomen on the shore, and perceived plainly that they ran from their clothes.

They sprang out of the boat and called after them, "Why run ye so? Ye must see that we be strangers, and that, if ye depart, ye may lose your rich and fine linen."

But they made as they had heard it not, albeit the

voice had reached their ears. Sir Herwig spake too loud, for he knew not that he stood so nigh to his dear one.

"Tell us, whose be these clothes, lovely damsels," said the Prince of Sweden. "We pray you in good faith, and by the honour of all maidens to come back to the beach."

"I were shamed if I answered not, since thou hast sworn by the honour of all maidens," said Gudrun. "A maid am I, and it shall advantage thee, even though I weep for it later."

They went back in their wet shifts. In better case were the noble maidens aforetime, but now, poor serving-women, they shivered with the cold, for little was their cost to them that kept them, and, certes, the March wind hurt them sore.

It fell in the season when the winter is over, and after the March days the birds begin to vie again with each other in the singing of songs. The poor maidens were found in snow and ice.

The knights saw them approach with streaming hair ruffled by the March wind, albeit both their heads were comely. In pitiful plight were the high-born maidens, whether it rained or snowed. The sea was all covered with loose ice, and great was their misery. Their fair bodies shone snow-white through their shifts, and they were sore troubled because of the strangers.

Noble Herwig bade the homeless maidens good morrow, that had much need of a kind greeting, for their mistress was scarce human, and "Good morrow" or "Good even" was welcome to them.

"Tell us," said Ortwin, "whose be the rich garments on the sand, and for whom ye wash. Ye are both so fair that I would hear the name of him

that doeth you such wrong. May God have him in derision! So right beautiful are ye that ye might wear crowns. If it suited with your birth, ye might rule lands with great honour. Hath he that ye do this base service for more washerwomen as fair?"

Whereto the fair damsel answered sorrowfully, "He hath many fairer. Now ask what ye will. We have a mistress that will make us pay dear, if she see from the battlements that we talk with you."

"Let it not irk you to take our gold. Four good bracelets shall be your meed (and gladly we give it) if, nothing loath, ye answer the questions we would ask."

"God guard to you your bracelets," answered the maiden. "We will take no reward. Ask what ye will, for we must away. Were we seen with you, I were grieved from my heart."

"Whose is this heritage, and the great land with the goodly castles? What is the name of him that setteth thee to this base office? If he desire honour, none will approve him."

"One of the princes that rule over this wide land and the strong and goodly castles is called Hartmut," she answered. "The other is Ludwig of Normandy, and many heroes serve him. They dwell here in high esteem."

"We would gladly see them," said Ortwin. "Can ye tell us, fair maidens, how to find both the kings in their country? We have been sent to them. Yea, we are from the court of a king."

High-born Gudrun answered the knights, "I left them early this morning abed in the castle, with four thousand men at the least. I know not whether they have ridden forth since then."

Said Sir Herwig, "Canst thou tell us of whom the

bold men stand in such dread, that they have so many knights always by them? Had I that number in my castle, I trow I could conquer a king's land."

"We know naught of that, nor in what quarter the princes' realm lieth," said the maiden. "But there is a far-off country called the land of the Hegelings: them they have in fear evermore, lest there come thence an army of grim foemen."

The lovely damsels shivered with the cold, and Prince Herwig said, "If ye fair ones deemed it not a shame, haply ye might wear our cloaks here on the beach."

But Hilda's daughter answered, "God guard to you both your mantles. Never shall any eye behold a man's raiment on my body."

Had they known it, worse had oft befallen them.

Herwig looked at the maiden many times. She seemed so beautiful to him and so goodly that he sighed from his heart. He deemed her like one that he often thought on with love.

Then Ortwin, King of Ortland, said, "I would ask you both if ye know aught of a company of court maidens that came to this land. One among them was called Gudrun."

"Yea, I know that such a company came hither long ago. After a great war they were brought here in piteous case. Them that ye look for I have seen in sore trouble. This is sooth that I say."

She that spake was one of them that Hartmut had carried off—even Gudrun herself, wherefore she minded the story the better.

Then said Prince Herwig, "Behold now, Sir Ortwin, if thy sister yet live in any land on the earth, this is she. I never saw one so like her."

But King Ortwin answered, "She is right goodly,

yet she resembleth not my sister. I mind well how, when we were both young, so fair a maiden none could find in all the world."

When she heard that the name of the bold warrior was Ortwin, poor Gudrun looked at him again. She had gladly known if it was her brother, for so had her sorrow been ended.

"Whatsoever thy name be, thou art a praiseworthy knight. I know one like to thee called Herwig, that was from Zealand. Lived the hero still he would loose us from our cruel bondage. I am one of them that Hartmut's host took in battle and brought captive across the sea. Ye seek Gudrun, but ye do it vainly, for the Hegeling maid died in misery."

At this the bright eyes of Ortwin dropped tears, nor could Herwig forbear to weep. When she told them that beautiful Gudrun was dead, the heroes were doleful of their cheer.

When she saw them both weeping before her, the homeless one said, "Ye do on such wise, good knights, and have the air, as Gudrun had been one of your kin."

"I will sorrow for her to my life's end," answered Prince Herwig. "The maiden was my betrothed wife, and plighted to me by a solemn vow. I lost her later through old Ludwig's devices."

"Ye would deceive me," said the poor maiden. "I have often heard of Herwig's death. A whole world's bliss did I win were he anywhere alive; but, lived he, he had surely borne me hence."

She looked at his hand and saw a ring on it, in the gold whereof was set a jewel of Abalie, the fairest she had ever seen on earth, and that she had aforetime worn on her finger.

The maiden laughed for joy, and said, "I know the ring well; and once it was mine. Now shalt thou

behold this one that my beloved sent me, while I, wretched maid that I am, still abode joyfully in my father's land."

He looked at her hand, and when he saw the gold he said to Gudrun, "Thou comest of none but a royal father, and now, after long sorrow, I have seen my delight and my bliss."

He put his arms round the royal maiden. They were both glad and heavy at the news. He kissed the high princess, I know not how often, and also Hildeburg, the fair and forlorn one.

Then Ortwin began to ask a thing which irked them sore: if they could serve in no other fashion than to wash clothes on the beach.

"Tell me, my sister," he said, "where be the children thou hast borne to Hartmut, that they leave thee to wash alone on the shore. If thou be queen, it profits thee little."

But she answered him weeping, "How should I bring my children hither? All that dwell by Hartmut know that he could never move me to love him. It is for that I am forced to this toil."

"Then I hold that our journey could not have prospered better," cried Sir Herwig. "Let us carry them from this stronghold with all speed."

But Sir Ortwin said, "I trow that cannot be. Had I an hundred sisters I had liefer let them all die than hide me in a strange land, and steal from my grim foemen what they took from me in battle."

The knight of Zealand answered, "I fear greatly that, if they discover us, they will carry off the maidens so far that they will let us no more behold them with our eyes. Wherefore let us deal secretly in this matter."

But Ortwin cried, "How can we leave the court-

maidens behind? They have tarried so long in this land of strangers that they may well be weary. The attendants of my sister Gudrun shall all have part in her good fortune."

"Where are thy senses?" said Sir Herwig. "I will carry off my dear one, and afterwards we will do what we may for the damsels."

But Ortwin cried, "Liefer were I hewn with swords."

Thereupon the sorrowful maiden said, "What have I done to thee, dear brother Ortwin? There is naught in me worthy of blame. I know not, noble Prince, for what sin thou wouldst make me atone."

"I do it not for hate of thee, dear sister, but that thy maidens may be saved the surer. I cannot bear thee hence with dishonour, but thou shalt yet have noble Herwig, thy dear one, to thy beloved."

They went down to the ship, and the noble maiden wept, saying, "Alack, woe is me! Now is my sorrow endless. They that I trusted to for help and deliverance have scorned me. My joy is still far off."

The valiant knights rowed swiftly from the shore, and poor Gudrun cried after Herwig, "Once I was the highest and now I am the lowest. To whom hast thou left me, or in whom shall I, a wretched orphan, find comfort?"

"Thou art not the lowest, but shalt be the highest," answered Herwig. "Keep thou my journey hither secret, noble princess. Trow me, or morning light I will be before these halls with eighty thousand of my bold warriors."

The knights hasted away as quick as they could. I trow there was never so bitter a parting between friends. The maidens followed the envoys with their eyes as long as they were in sight.

They forgot the washing, but wicked Gerlint had seen how they stood idle down below on the sand, and was grimly wroth, yea, sore angered, that their work went not forward.

Then said Hildeburg, the maid from Ireland, "Why leavest thou the clothes lying, and wastest not the garments for Ludwig's men? If Gerlint perceive it, we shall suffer as never before from her blows."

But Hilda's daughter answered, "I am too high ever again to wash for Gerlint. Service so base were now a shame to me, for two kings have kissed me and encircled me with their arms."

"Take it not amiss," said Hildeburg, "if I tell thee we must whiten better the apparel, that we bear it not so dirty back to her chamber. Else will our backs be well seen to with blows."

But the grandchild of Hagen said, "Joy draweth nigh me, comfort and delight. If they beat me with besoms till to-morrow, I trow I shall not die. Before that, some of them will perish that do us so great wrong. I will carry these clothes to the water. They too shall profit by it that I am again as a king's daughter. I will throw them on the waves that they may sail away free."

For all Hildeburg could say, Gudrun carried Gerlint's fine linen down to the sea, and flung it from her hands far out on to the waves. The things floated to and fro for a while. Whether they were ever found again I know not.

The night drew nigh and the day was done, when Hildeburg went heavy-laden to the castle, bearing the rest of the clothes and seven pieces of fine linen. But Ortwin's sister walked behind her empty-handed. It was very late when they came to Ludwig's castle, where they found Gerlint standing outside, that

waited for them, and greeted the noble washerwomen with angry words.

"Who hath given you leave to loiter?" said the queen. "Both your bodies shall suffer for it, that ye wander so late on the shore. It is not fitting for a king's wife to see you in her chamber. Tell me straightway why ye have done this. Ye disdain mighty kings and hate them, yet gossip with low-born knaves by night. It suiteth ill with honour, if ye prize it."

"Wherefore slanderest thou me?" answered the high-born maiden. "Never have I, that am forsaken of God, held any so dear that I would hold converse with him, except it were my kinsmen, that I have the right to speak with."

"Hold thy peace, thou wicked wench! Wouldst thou call me a liar? I will be avenged on thee this night on such wise that thou wilt voice thy anger less loud henceforward. Thy back shall rue it or I give over."

"I counsel thee to beat me no more with thy besoms, for I am of far higher kin than thou. Thou mayest yet repent thine inhuman dealing."

But the she-wolf answered, "Where is my linen, that thou bast folded thy hands so idly in thy lap? If I live, I will teach thee to serve me better."

"I left it lying by the water," answered Hagen's grandchild. "When I would have carried it hither to court it was too beavy. I care little, by my troth, if thou never see it more."

"This shall advantage thee little," cried the she-devil. "How thou shalt suffer for it afore I sleep!"

She bade them break rods from the bedge, and bind them into a besom, nor would she be turned from her wolfish intent. She made them tie Gudrun to a bed-post, and left none in the chamber beside her. She

would have torn the fair skin from her bones, and the maidens that knew it began to weep bitterly.

But Gudrun spake craftily. "Let me tell thee one thing: if I be beaten with this besom here to-night, thou shalt pay for it, if ever I stand by the great king and wear a crown. Wherefore thou didst well to withhold this chastisement. I will sooner wed him that I have denied, and dwell here a queen in Normandy; and if I become mighty, I will do what none would trow of me."

"Then is my wrath appeased," said Queen Gerlint. "If thou hadst lost a thousand pieces of my fine linen, I would make shift without them; and well shall it be for thee, if thou wed Prince Hartmut of Normandy."

"I will make good the past," answered the beautiful maiden, "for I cannot endure these many torments. Bid hither the king, and I will obey him henceforth."

When they heard this word they ran in haste and told it to valiant Hartmut. Some of his father's men sat with him when there came one and summoned him to Gudrun. "Give me the envoy's fee," he said openly, "for fair Hilda's daughter commendeth her service to thee, and biddeth thee to her chamber. She will shun thee no longer, but hath bethought her better."

"Thou liest in vain," answered the noble knight. "Were the tidings true I would give thee for thy fee three goodly castles and great wealth, also sixty golden armlets; for I should live happy evermore."

But another of the envoys said, "I heard it likewise, and will share thy gift. Thou art bidden to court; the noble maiden said that she would wed thee gladly, and if thou desire it, she will be queen in this land."

Hartmut thanked the messenger. How right joyfully he sprang from his seat! He deemed that God had granted him her love, and in merry mood he went to the maiden's chamber.

The princess stood there in her wet shift, and greeted him with tears. She went towards him, and stood so nigh that he would have taken her in his arms.

But she said, "Nay, Hartmut, do it not; for if the folk saw it they would blame thee. I am a poor washerwoman, and it might well dishonour thee to embrace me, for thou art a mighty king. How were it seemly for thee to hold me in thy arms? I will gladly allow it when I stand with a crown on my head before thy good knights. When I am called a queen thou shalt not need to shame thee, and when it is seemly for us both, thou shalt embrace me."

Of his great courtesy he stood back thereupon, and said to Gudrun, "Most beautiful maiden, since thou hast promised to wed me, I will richly reward thee. Thou shalt command me and my friends as thou wouldst."

The damsel answered, "Never was I more joyful of my cheer. If I, a poor God-forsaken one, may command, my first order after my great misery is this, that they bring me my maidens straightway, wherever they find them among Gerlint's women. Let none of them be left in her chamber."

"That will I do gladly," said Hartmut; and they brought thither many lovely damsels that came to the court with unkempt hair and in wretched apparel. Wicked Gerlint had done foolishly.

Three-and-sixty came where Hartmut saw them, and noble Gudrun said courteously, "Behold them, great king; deemest thou this honourable usage? How have the maidens been entreated?"

He answered, "They shall suffer it no more."

"For my sake, Hartmut," the high-born maiden said, "let all my damsels that have been ill-cared for here be bathed this night. Follow my counsel and see to it thyself, that they go in sumptuous raiment."

Hartmut, the chosen knight, answered, "Dear Princess Gudrun, if any of their garments be lost that they brought with them, the best shall be given to them that the world holdeth anywhere. Gladly will I see them stand beside thee fitly apparelled."

Whereupon they made haste with the baths, and many of Hartmut's kin charged them with the office of chamberlain, and busied them in their service, that they might win their favour afterwards.

So the royal maiden was delicately bathed, with her maidens, and the best raiment that any could wear was brought for them all, that the lowliest among them might have pleased a king.

When they were bathed, wine was carried to them, than which there was none finer in Normandy, and goodly mead also had the maidens. How could Hartmut trow it of them that on such wise they would thank him?

The fair ones sat in a hall, and Queen Gerlint bade her daughter Ortrun attire herself, with her damsels, if she would see Hilda's daughter with her court maidens.

Whereupon noble Ortrun clad her straightway, and went joyfully in to Gudrun, and the grandchild of wild Hagen came towards her. When they met, all could see their joy and gladness. They kissed one another under their headgear of goodly red gold that their colour matched for brightness, yet their minds were divided. Ortrun rejoiced to see the noble washerwoman so sumptuously apparelled, but Gudrun

was merry, as we have heard, because she was so soon to see her mighty kinsmen. They sat together jesting. To be looked upon by them had made a heavy heart light.

"Well for me," said Ortrun, "that I have lived to see the day whereon thou hast consented to abide here by Hartmut. To reward thee for thy good will in this matter, thou shalt have my mother Gerlint's crown, that I should have worn."

"God bless thee for this," said Gudrun. "I will always obey thee gladly. Often hast thou wept because of my heart's sorrow, and never a day will I fail in true service towards thee."

Then she said with maidenly cunning, "It were well didst thou send out envoys through Normandy, Sir Hartmut, that, if it appear good to them, thy nearest kinsmen may come to court. If the land be at peace, I would wear the crown by thy side in the presence of thy warriors, and see, from the number of thy kinsmen, the might of him that desireth to wed me. Myself and my dear ones I will then show to thy knights."

It was a wise thought, for all the messengers he could find, an hundred or more, were sent out, and the enemy was the weaker when the Hegelings came against Hartmut; which was the intent of the maiden.

Then said Queen Gerlint, "Dear daughter, ye must part, but when it is morning ye shall again discourse sweetly together." Whereupon she bowed before Gudrun, and prayed God to have her in his keeping.

Hartmut also left them, and cupbearers and stewards were sent to them. These were bidden see well to the proud and high-born maidens, that needed not to ask for service twice. The homeless ones were well plied with drink and with meat.

But one of the beautiful Hegeling damsels said, "When we think that we must tarry joyless evermore with them that brought us hither, our hearts are heavy. We had never thought to do it." She began to weep before her mistress, and when they saw this, many of the maidens wept with her, for sorrowfully they remembered their woes.

But Gudrun laughed. They deemed they must abide there for ever, whereas their mistress had not tarried there of her own will four days, and she laughed, till some that harkened whispered it to Gerlint. She that had known no joy for fourteen years laughed louder than beseemed her courteous breeding.

The wicked hag heard it plain, and made a sign to Ludwig. She was sore troubled and went in haste to Hartmut and said, "My son, woe shall surely betide all the people of this land; I know not wherefore Gudrun, the fair princess, laugheth. However it hath come to pass, or on what wise soever she hath heard it, secret messengers are come from her friends. Have a care, great and noble knight, that thou lose not through them both life and honour."

He answered, "Let the matter be. I grudge her not any joy she may have with her maidens. Her nearest of kin dwell afar; how then can they harm me? I trow they will do me little scathe."

Gudrun asked her attendants if the beds were made ready, for she desired to sleep. For this one night they were parted from their woe.

Thereupon King Hartmut's chamberlain went with the maidens, and Norman pages carried their lights. Little service had they done them heretofore. Thirty or more clean beds awaited them, where the noble daughters of warriors were to lie.

Cushions from Arabia in many colours were piled thereon. Green like grass, and decked with precious stones were the rich coverlets. The bright stuffs were lined with fishes' skins and broidered with goodly silk, wherein the gold shone red as fire.

Well did Hartmut love the fair Hegeling damsel. He knew not what woe her kinsmen were to bring him.

Then said the noble maiden, "Hartmut's heroes, ye may go and sleep. For this one night my women and I would have rest. None have we had since we came hither."

So all the strangers, old and young, withdrew, and Hartmut's men hastened from the chamber to take their ease. With mead and wine the poor damsels were well provided.

Then said Hilda's daughter, "Shut to the door." And they shot four strong bolts across it. The walls also were so thick that none could hear what went forward within.

So first they sat and drank good wine. Then said the highest among them, "My maidens, ye have cause for joy after your great misery. I will gladden your eyes to-morrow with the sight of your friends. To-day I kissed Herwig my betrothed husband, and Ortwin, my brother. Now, mark ye this: whoso would be enriched by me, and would live free from care, let her watch and tell us when the night is over, and it is day. Her reward will not be small, for joyful times draw nigh. I will give her large and goodly castles, and wealth without stint. These I may well have, if I live till they call me a queen."

Then they laid them down to sleep. They were merry of their cheer, for they knew that valiant warriors were come to help them in their great need, and all their desire was to behold them on the morrow.

Ludwig's country, and Ortwin and his knights still stand with their wrong and their shame unavenged."

"Ask Herwig, that hath seen them likewise, and in such piteous case that worse could not have befallen us. Think now, all ye kinsmen, if this be a shame or no: we found Gudrun and Hildeburg washing clothes on the beach."

Thereupon Gudrun's kinsmen fell weeping, but old Wate cried angrily, "Ye do like women, wailing ye know not why, which beseemeth not heroes. Would ye help Gudrun from her misery, ye must redden the garments that she hath washed white with her white hands. So shall ye serve her, and so shall she win back from exile."

Then Frute of Denmark said, "How shall we win to Ludwig's knights or they learn that Hilda's men be in Normandy?"

Old Wate answered, "I know a way, and I trow I shall work as I ought before their castle, live I to come nigh them. Ye must away from here, ye knights, and hasten towards Normandy. I rejoice that the air is so soft and that the moon shineth so full and so clear. Now put we out quickly from the shore, that we reach Ludwig's castle or morning."

Following Wate's advice they loitered not, and soon had their horses and their armour aboard the ships. They made for the land in haste by night, and were on the beach before the castle or it was day.

Wate bade the host keep silence over all, and lie down softly on the sand. The water-weary knights got leave to put down their shields, and many laid their heads thereon.

"Let him that would triumph on the morrow have a care that he sleep not too long," said old Wate. "Hard hath it been to wait for battle until now,

wherefore see to it, good warriors, that, when the day dawneth, none of you lingers. And further I say unto you: whether he standeth or lieth, let him that heareth my trumpet blow make ready straightway for strife, that none tarry when I tell you it is day. When I blow for the second time, look to it that they have saddled for you, and stand ready by your horses, till I have spied the light; that none come too late for the hour of battle."

They said they would obey him gladly. How many fair women he parted from their joy with death-deep wounds! The Hegelings waited eagerly all together for the dawn.

"When I have blown three blasts, dear friends, ye shall sit well armed on your horses, and shall wait till ye behold me in my harness riding behind fair Hilda's banner."

So the weary ones lay down on the shore close to Ludwig's castle. Albeit the night had fallen, they all saw it plain. The proud knights laid them noiselessly to rest.

Now was the morning star uprisen, and a fair maiden went to the window and peered forth to see when it would be day, that she might win great reward from Gudrun. She saw a glimmer of dawn, and the helmets of heroes and many a bright shield reflected in the water's gleam. The castle was surrounded, and all the plain glittered with weapons.

So she hasted to her mistress crying, "Wake, noble lady! All the land and this strong castle are beleaguered by foemen. Our friends at home have not forgotten us poor maidens."

Gudrun sprang from her bed and ran to the window. She thanked the damsel, that won wealth as a reward

for the news. She was sore bested and looked out eagerly for her friends.

She saw rich sails flapping on the water, and said, "Now for the first time I know sorrow. Woe is me, poor God-forsaken one, that ever I was born! Many a valiant man will perish this day."

While she spake thus the most of the folk slept still. But Ludwig's watchman cried with a loud voice, "Up, ye proud warriors! To arms, ye knights! To arms! King of Normandy, I ween thou hast slept overlong."

Gerlint, Ludwig's wife, heard him and left the old king lying. She hastened to the battlements and saw many strangers. The she-devil was right doleful of her cheer.

She ran back to the king and cried, "Awake, Sir Ludwig! Thy castle and thy land are beleaguered by terrible foes. Thy knights shall pay dear to-day for the laughter of Gudrun."

"Hold thy peace," said Ludwig, "I will see them for myself. We must await what shall befall us." Whereupon he went swiftly to spy from his castle wall. He had guests that day that he little looked for.

He beheld broad banners waving before his castle and said, "We must tell it to my son Hartmut. Haply these be pilgrims encamped before the town and before my castle for merchandise."

So they waked Hartmut, and when they told him the news the good knight said, "Have no fear; I know the royal banners of twenty lands. Our foemen, I ween, are come to avenge on us their old wrong."

"There I see one that is whiter than a swan; pictures broidered in gold thou mayest behold on it. That hath Hilda, my mother-in-law, sent across the sea. We shall prove the hate of the Hegelings or night.

"And here waveth a broad banner of sky-blue silk with sea-roses wrought on it. Herwig of Zealand, that is eager to avenge his wrong, hath borne it hither. I trow well that Irolt likewise is come, and with him many from Friesland and Holstein, all doughty warriors. Battle awaiteth us."

He cried then, "To arms, ye knights in the hall! Arise, all my men, for I grudge my grim guests this honour, that they have ridden so close to my castle. We will welcome them before the gate with swords."

Then all that were still abed sprang up, and called for their bright harness, that they might help the king to guard the land. Four thousand men or more armed them featly. Ludwig and Hartmut likewise did on their armour.

The homeless maidens liked it little. They had no comfort in the castle, and one of them said, "He that laughed last year shall weep this."

Then came Queen Gerlint, Ludwig's wife, in haste and said, "What wouldst thou do, Sir Hartmut? Wouldst thou lose thy life with all these warriors? Surely the enemy will slay thee if thou go out before the castle."

But the noble knight answered, "Get thee gone, my mother; thou shalt not teach me and my men. Instruct thy women, that may well endure it, how to broider silk with jewels and with gold. Bid Gudrun and her maidens go washing as thou hast done afore. Thou didst deem she had neither kinsmen nor vassals. Thou shalt see this day how eagerly the guests thank us."

But the she-devil said, "It was for thy sake that I sought to force her. Now follow my counsel. Thy castle is strong. Bid them bolt the gate. So shall thy guests profit little by their journey hither. Thou knowest well, Hartmut, that they hate thee, for thou slewest their kinsmen; wherefore guard thee the better. Thou hast no friends before the gate; the proud Hegelings have brought twenty against thy one. Also, think thereon, my dear son: thou hast in this house bread and wine, and good meats for a year at the least. If any be taken captive here, for no ransom will they be loosed."

King Ludwig's wife counselled the knight further, saying, "Guard thine honour and lose not thy life. Bid them deal death-wounds with cross-bows from the windows, that their friends at home may mourn for them. Let ropes be put to the catapults for these guests. Sooner than have thee use swords against the enemy, I and my maidens will carry the stones in white sleeves."

But Hartmut answered wrathfully, "Queen, get thee hence. Wherefore shouldst thou counsel me? To what end have I senses of my own? I were liefer slain out yonder by Hilda's men than found shut up in the castle."

Then the old king's wife said weeping, "I counselled it that thou mightest the better guard thy life. Whoso shloweth him this day under thy banner may look for all good at our hand. Now arm you!" she cried to the knights, "and, standing by the side of my son, smite hot sparks of fire from the helmets. Keep close to the hero this day, and welcome the guests with deep wounds."

"The queen counselleth you well, good knights," said Hartmut. "Whoso fighteth with good will and

helpeth me to overcome the foe, if the father perish, his children will I make rich."

Ludwig's men stood armed in the castle, to the number of one thousand and one hundred, yet, or they went out at the king's gate, he saw to it that the castle was guarded, and left therein five hundred or more bold knights and good.

Then they did back the bolts of the four gates of the castle. They lacked not so much as a spur in their equipment. They that went with the young king, to help him, rode behind him to the number of three thousand with their helmets on.

The hour of battle drew nigh, and the hero of Sturmland blew a horn that for its mighty sound could be heard full thirty miles along the shore, and the Hegelings began to hasten to Hilda's banner.

Then he blew another blast, that each knight might be sitting in his saddle, with his men ready, and facing the way whither they should ride. Never was old warrior so valiant in war.

He blew so loud a third time that the shores trembled, and the waves resounded. The corner stones might have fallen from Ludwig's walls. Then he bade Horant bear forward fair Hilda's banner.

They feared old Wate greatly, and made no noise; the neighing of a horse had easily been heard. The betrothed of Herwig stood above in a turret, and the bold knights that came to fight with Hartmut were seen riding proudly.

Hartmut and his men, all well armed, were now come through the gates, and the helmets of foemen and friends gleamed through the casement. Hartmut also, I trow, rode not alone.

The Hegelings advanced on the castle from the four sides, and all their harness was the colour of

silver. The bosses, likewise, shone on the bright shields. They feared old Wate as he had been a wild lion. The Moors rode apart, hurling mighty javelins. Many a lance was splintered there. When they joined battle with the Normans, sparks of fire were struck from swords and from harness.

Then the Danes rode forward to the castle. To one side of the wall stark Irold led six thousand or more; good knights were they all, and wrought sore havoc on Ludwig. Ortwin with eight hundred men rode up to the hurt of the land of Normandy and of the folk therein.

Gerlint and Ortrun stood weeping on the battlements.

Then came Sir Herwig, Gudrun's betrothed, by whom many women were made to mourn, when he began to fight for his heart's dear one. Helmets rang loud beneath good swords. And now old Wate with his knights was come also, that they had heard was grim of his mood. With a spear not yet couched he rode to the front of the host. It irked Gerlint sore, but Gudrun had cause to thank him.

Then they saw Hartmut that rode before his men. Had he been an emperor he had not been arrayed more proudly. His armour shone against the sun, and his courage was still unquenched.

Ortwin, the King of Ortland, saw him and said, "Will any that knoweth tell me who this knight is? He hath the air of one that, by the prowess of his hand, would win from us a kingdom."

"That is Hartmut," one of them answered. "Where heroes are proven he is a doughty knight. It was he that slew thy father. He is bold in battle and right valiant."

Cried Ortwin in wrath, "Then is his life forfeit

to me. This day he shall pay me to the full. All that we have lost through him we shall win back. Gerlint shall not help him to escape alive."

Hartmut saw Ortwin, and albeit he knew him not, he spurred his horse to the gallop and rode at him. They both levelled their spears, that their harness shone bright from the blows. They forgot not to thrust at each other, till Ortwin's good horse fell back on its haunches, for it was not strong enough for the fierce rage of the kings.

The horse of Hartmut stumbled likewise; but they sprang up again, and a loud din arose from the kings' swords. Praise was their due, that they strove on such knightly wise; they were both bold, and neither would yield to the other.

Their men rode up with couched spears, and many a mother's son was the worse for it. The good knights gave each other deep wounds in the fray. They were all valiant, and eagerly wooed honour.

Hartmut's men began to press against the men of Wate, thousand against thousand. The lord of Sturm-land wrought sore havoc. Whoso came nigh to him thought on battle no more.

Then ten thousand men crowded in among Herwig's host; grimly they advanced. They had sooner perished there than that any had driven them from the land.

Herwig was a hero. How proudly he strove! He fought valiantly, that the beautiful maiden might show him the more favour. How could he have believed such good fortune: that young Gudrun saw all that was done?

Now the Danes and old Ludwig were met. Ludwig bare a strong sword in his hand, and stood like a king. But he and his men came out too far from the gates.

Bold Frute with the men of Holstein slew many; he was dauntless enow. And Morunc, the young knight from Waleis, dinged the earth with dead before Ludwig's castle. Young Irolt, too, was a good warrior, and hewed hot blood from the harness; the kinsman of Wate fought beneath Hilda's banner, till the faces of the fallen were seen whitening, and the close ranks were thinned.

Then Hartmut and Ortwin met again. Never was snow blown so thick by the wind as the strokes dealt by the swords in the hands of the heroes, when Hartmut was set upon by the King of Ortland. Young Ortwin was bold enough, but strong Hartmut smote him through the helmet, that his bright harness ran with blood. It irked Ortwin's men sore to behold it. There was struggle and tumult of battle. Many were smitten with wide wounds, and many heads bowed before the swords. Death did as one that is fain to rob folk of good friends.

When Horant of Denmark saw Ortwin wounded, he asked who had hurt his dear master; whereat Hartmut laughed, that was come nigh him, and Ortwin himself answered, "It was Hartmut."

Thereupon Hilda's banner, that he bare with honour and to the scathe of the foe, Horant gave to another, and made furiously at Hartmut.

Hartmut heard a great din beside him, and saw the blood of many flowing freely from their wounds down to their feet.

Then cried the bold knight, "I will avenge this hurt to my men."

He turned him round where he saw Horant, and fire soon blazed before their eyes from each other's harness, and their sword-points were bended on the buckles of their helmets.

He wounded Horant, even as he had wounded Ortwin, that a red stream flowed from his armour. Who could think to win the land of so valiant hero?

In this hour of peril the followers of both the kings also cleft many strong shields with good swords. They dealt heavy blows in the battle, while Hartmut defended himself with honour. The friends of Ortwin and of Horant saw to it that they won out of the press, that they might have their wounds bound, which was soon done. Whereupon they rode back and fought again.

Now leave we them to fight as they will. They knew not yet before Ludwig's castle which side should win and which be overcome. His men stood grimly on their defence and the strangers, I ween, wooed honour. I cannot tell you fully of each one; but the memory of many that were slain there hath been handed down to us. The din of swords was heard at the four gates, and both the swift and the slow were mingled in the tumult.

Wate stood not idle. I trow. Many lay hewn by his hand, whose lives he had ended. The kinsmen of the good Norman knights were fain to avenge it.

And now Herwig, they tell us, was come with a vast host to where he saw old Ludwig fighting, and where he and his followers felled good knights, more than could be numbered.

Loud cried Herwig then, "Doth any know the name of yonder old man? He hath dealt so many deep wounds with the strength of his arm that he hath given fair women cause to weep."

Ludwig heard him and said, "Who asketh my name in the shock of battle? I am Ludwig of Normandy. Might I fight with the foeman, certes I am ready."

"If thou be Ludwig," answered King Herwig,

"thou hast deserved my hate, for thou slewest many of our knights on the Wülpensand. Hetel also perished by thee, that was a valiant warrior. And yet more thou didst to our hurt or thou didst sail away: wrongs that we still mourn bitterly and from which I won great heaviness of heart. Thou didst steal my wife there, and hew down many of my warriors. I am Herwig, and thou hast taken my betrothed from me. Except thou give her back to me, one of us must die, and many another knight besides."

But Ludwig answered, "Thou threatenest me too loud in my own land. None asked to know thee. There be yet more here that I have bereft of wealth and kinsmen. I will see to it that thou never win to kiss thy wife. Trow me for that."

At this word the two great kings ran at each other. He that had the advantage won it hard through the fighting of his men, for many goodly youths sprang towards them from both their banners.

Herwig was dauntless and bold enough, but Hartmut's father smote the young king, till he began to stumble before his hand. He had fain taken from him both his kingdom and his life. Had not Herwig's men been near and quick to help him, he had never won off alive. So could old Ludwig make him feared of young men.

They ran to Herwig's aid, that he perished not, but when he was come to from his fall, he glanced up swiftly to the battlements to see whether his heart's beloved stood there.

TWENTY-EIGHTH ADVENTURE

HOW HERWIG SLEW LUDWIG

HERWIG thought within himself, "Alack! What hath befallen me! If, Gudrun, my betrothed wife, hath seen this, and we live to the day when I embrace her, she will reproach me with this when I lie beside her. Much I shame me that the grey old man hath struck me down."

So he bade them bear his banner after Ludwig, and his men followed and pressed up to the enemy, and would not let him escape.

When Ludwig heard the din behind him he turned back and went down against Herwig. Many a sword rang on the helmets. They that came nigh them suffered from the wrath of the kings. They spurred towards each other on the field, where host charged host with loud din in the battle. Who could count the folk that perished there? And so it came to pass that Ludwig lost the victory when he fought with Herwig.

Over the rim of his helmet Gudrun's lover with a strong arm won at Ludwig under his helmet, and wounded him so sore that he could fight no longer, but awaited grim death.

He smote him a strong blow for the second time, that the king's head sprang from his shoulders. Certes, he avenged well his fall, for the king was

dead; and by reason thereof bright eyes ran over with tears.

When he was slain, Ludwig's knights would have borne back the banner to the castle, but they were come out too far from the gates, and the banner was taken from them, and many tarried dead by their lord.

The watchmen saw that he had lost his life, whereat men and women were heard weeping loud, for they knew that the old and mighty king was slain. Gudrun and her maidens stood in doubt and fear in the palace.

Sir Hartmut knew not that his father was fallen, with many good knights and many youths that were their kinsmen; but he heard bitter wailing in the castle, and saw gestures of woe, and he said to his followers, "Now turn with me. Many lie dead here that were fain to slay us in grim battle; we will go back to the castle and await a better hour."

So they followed him, and turned where he rode. With doughty arm they had hewn their way across the battle-field through their grim foemen. By the hand of Hartmut and his knights blood flowed near and far.

"Ye have served me on such wise, both kinsmen and vassals," said Hartmut, "that I will share my kingdom with you. Now ride we to my castle, that we may rest. They will open the gates for us and give us mead and wine."

They had left many dead behind them. Had the land been their own, his men had not done more valiantly in battle, and now they would have won to the castle, but Wate with a thousand of his knights hindered them sore. He had ridden up with so great a host to the gate where Hartmut would have gone in with his followers, that they could not compass

it. It helped them little that they saw many heavy stones hurled down from the wall.

Grimly they hurled them at Wate and his heroes, as it had been a rain-storm from the sky. But it was all one to Wate who lived or who perished. He thought only how to win the victory.

Then Sir Hartmut saw him before the castle gate and cried, "What we have deserved from their hand from aforetime will be shown plain this day. They that are whole may well fear for their lives; yea, many dead lie round us. Sore it irketh me that ever I won such stark foemen. I see Wate and his knights yonder at the castle gate hewing with their swords. If he be the porter I look for little kindness. See for yourselves, ye warriors: the walls and the gates are surrounded, and many knights stand before them. They hold the road on all the four sides. The kinsmen of Gudrun strive fiercely for victory. Ye yourselves may see it even as I have seen. There will be friends lost to us.

"How it hath come to pass, I know not, but yonder is the Moorish banner waving before the outer gate, and my knights that strongly withstand them. In the next gate likewise I see my foemen; the wind swayeth all the sword-points broidered on their pennons. Sir Ortwin is there, Gudrun's brother, that is fain to serve women. Or his courage cool, more helmets will be cloven.

"By the third gate I see Herwig, followed by seven thousand men or more. On knightly wise he serveth for his heart's delight; which Gudrun and her women see gladly this day. Too late is my thought to ride back. I know not whither to turn with my knights, since old Wate fighteth at the fourth gate. Long, I trow, must my folk wait for their kinsmen.

"I cannot fly: I have no wings; nor can I win under the earth, whatever befall me. We cannot come to the sea, because of the foe. I will tell you plain what I hold to be the best. Noble and good knights, there is no other way. Dismount, and hew hot blood out of the bright harness with a good will."

So they got down from their saddles, and drove the horses behind them.

"Now forward, bold knights!" cried Hartmut. "Make for the castle. For good or ill I must win to old Wate. However it fare with me, I will try to force him back from the gate."

Thereupon brave Hartmut and his men ran forward with drawn swords. Hartmut withstood grim Wate, which was to his honour. Then was heard the clash of weapons; whereby there fell the more knights.

When Wate saw Hartmut press up to him (Frute bare the banner) the hero cried in wrath, "I hear the clash of good swords that come towards us. Frute, good kinsman, let none force thee from the gate."

Wate ran grimly at Hartmut, but the valiant man would not give way. Dust darkened the sun, yet was their might undiminished; valiantly they wooed honour. What availed it that they said Wate had the strength of six-and-twenty men? On knightly wise Hartmut of Normandy withstood him. Whatever the guests did, he and his men fought undismayed, for he was a hero and undaunted in battle. The dead lay around in a great heap. It was a wonder that Hartmut perished not by Wate, that was right grim of his mood.

He heard Ludwig's wife weeping bitterly. His mother bewailed the noble king, and offered great reward that they might not endure such wrong, but might slay Gudrun and all her maidens.

Then ran a false coward that desired the wealth, and frightened the beautiful Hegeling damsels, where they sat together. Because of the rich reward he would have done them all to death.

When Hilda's daughter saw a naked weapon pointed at her in wrath, she mourned with cause that she was so far from her friends. If Sir Hartmut had not seen it, her head had been cut off. She forgot her high breeding. How loud she screamed when she thought she must die! Sore was her anguish. The other maidens did the like, that were beside her in the wide window. Pitiful was their mien.

Sir Hartmut knew her by her voice, and he wondered what ailed her. Then the good knight saw a dastard that stood with a sword, as he would slay her, and the hero called out, "Who art thou, wretched coward? Why wouldst thou slay the damsels? If thou kill one of them thy life is forfeit, and all thy kinsmen shall surely hang for it."

Thereupon he that would have done the deed departed, for he feared Hartmut's anger. The king himself came nigh losing his life, but with true heart he comforted the God-forsaken one, and loosed her from grim death, while he himself stood in peril.

Then came Ortrun, the young princess of Normandy, in haste to Gudrun, wringing her hands, and fell at her feet. She wept bitterly for her father Ludwig, and she said, "Have pity, noble king's child, on all my kinsmen that lie dead here, and think how it was with thee when thy father was slain. Great Princess, to-day I have lost mine. Behold, high-born maiden, in what great sorrow we be fallen. My father and the most part of my kinsmen are dead. Now standeth Sir Hartmut in sore peril before Wate. If I lose my brother, I am orphaned for ever. Let it

advantage me that, when none pitied thee of all that be here, thou hadst no other friend save me alone. For all they did to thee I ceased not to weep."

"That hast thou often done," answered Hilda's daughter, "but I know not how to stay the battle, unless I were a knight and bare weapons. I would gladly part them, that none slew thy brother."

Ortrun wept bitterly. How eagerly she prayed, till Gudrun went into the window and signalled with her hand, asking if any knight from her father's country was there.

Herwig answered, that was a noble warrior and good, "Who art thou, O maiden, that asketh? No Hegeling knight is nigh thee. We be from Zealand. Tell me now wherein we can serve thee."

The damsel of kingly kin answered, "I would have thee part the battle, for fierce hath been the fighting, and would ever more thank him that lightened my cheer and saved Hartmut from old Wate in the strife."

"Tell me now thy name, noble maiden," said the knight of Zealand courteously.

She answered, "Gudrun is my name, and I am of the kin of Hagen. Albeit I was once mighty, I have little joy here."

"If thou be Gudrun, my dear wife," he said, "I will ever serve thee gladly. For I am Herwig and chose thee to my joy, and would show thee plain how willingly I would loose thee from all sorrow."

"If thou wouldst serve me, brave knight, take not our prayer amiss. These beautiful maidens earnestly entreat me that Hartmut be delivered from old Wate in the battle."

"I will do it gladly, dear lady."

Then Herwig cried aloud to his knights, "Forward with the banner against Wate!" And he and all his

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warriors pressed thither. Valiant women's service he did there.

He shouted to old Wate, "Wate, dear friend, let us end this battle straightway. It is the prayer of the beautiful maidens."

But Wate answered in wrath, "Get thee gone, Sir Herwig! Where were my senses if I followed women's counsel? To spare the enemy were to slay myself, and that I will never do. Hartmut shall pay for his pride."

Thereupon Herwig sprang on them both for love of Gudrun. Loud crashed the swords and angry was Wate, for he could ill brook that any parted him from his foes. He dealt Herwig a heavy blow when he would have sundered them, and the knight fell down before him. But Herwig's men ran in and drew him forth.

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could carry, when they were laden therewith on the deep sea.

None in the castle was merry. The folk of the land suffered great scathe. They slew men and women, and many a child in the cradle lost his life.

Stark Irold cried to Wate, "These young children have done naught to thy hurt. They are not guilty of our kinsmen's death. For the honour of God, have pity on the young orphans."

But old Wate answered, "Thou art childish thyself. Wouldst thou have me spare them that weep in the cradle? Lived these to be men, I would trow them no more than a wild Saxon."

Blood flowed from out the chambers on all sides. How woeful were the friends that saw it!

Then came high-born Ortrun to Gudrun, for she feared yet more evil, and bowed her head before the beautiful maiden, saying, "Princess Gudrun, have pity on my great woe, and let me not perish. If thou grant me not grace, I must perish here at the hand of thy kinsmen."

"I will gladly save thee if I can, for I grudge thee no honour or good. I will crave a pardon for thee. Thou mayest escape, and, to that end, stand the closer by me with thy maidens and thy women."

"Gladly will I do it," said young Ortrun.

So she was spared with three-and-thirty of her maidens, and two-and-sixty knights that stood beside the women. Had they left them, they had been hewn in pieces by the guests.

Thither, too, hasted wicked Gerlint, and offered herself as a servant, falling at the feet of Hilda's child.

"Now deliver us, O Princess, from Wate and his men. If thou hinder it not, my end is at hand."

But Hilda's daughter answered, "I hear thee pray

me to show thee grace. How can I do that? Nothing in this world hast thou ever given me that I asked for. Thou wert ever pitiless towards me; wherefore I hate thee from my heart."

In the meantime old Wate had caught sight of her. Gnashing his teeth he ran at her with glaring eyes, and beard an ell long. All that were there trembled before the knight of Sturmland. He was covered with blood: his armour was wet. Albeit Gudrun saw him gladly, she had liefer had him come less madly towards her. None, I ween, gave him welcome there for fear.

Only Gudrun durst step forward when she saw Wate. Hilda's blameless daughter said sorrowfully, "Weleome, Wate! How joyfully I had seen thee, had not so many suffered seathe here at thy hand."

"I thank thee, noble maiden. Art thou Hilda's child? Who be these women that stand so near thee?"

"This is high-born Ortrun," Gudrun answered. "Her, Wate, thou shalt spare. The women are sore afraid of thee. The others are the poor damsels that Ludwig's host brought across the sea from the Hegelings. Thou art wet with blood. Come not so close to us. Naught else wherein thou servest us will we poor maidens scorn."

Wate went then where he found Herwig, and Ortwin, the King of Ortland, Irolt and Morunc, and Frute of Denmark. They were not idle, but slew many good knights there.

Hergart, the young duchess, came running in haste. "Noble Gudrun," she cried, "have pity on me, a poor wife. Forget not that we were once of thy following, and be thereof still. Wherefore, noble Princess, save me."

But Gudrun answered in wrath, "Get thee gone.

Little didst thou mourn or heed all the evil that befell us poor homeless ones. Now is it all one to me likewise, whether it go well or ill with thee. Nevertheless stand closer to me among the maidens."

Old Wate still sought for his enemy, wicked Gerlint. The she-devil was by Princess Gudrun with her women.

Wate went grimly out before the hall and said, "Princess Gudrun, deliver me up Gerlint and her friends, that made thee go washing; and all the kin of them that slew our knights at home."

But the gracious maiden made answer, "There be none here."

Whereat Wate, greatly wroth, drew nigher and said, "If thou show me not the right ones straightway, they shall all perish, both strangers and friends."

They saw that he was mad with anger, and a fair damsel winked with her eyes, that he knew the she-devil.

"Tell me now, Queen Gerlint," he said, "desirest thou more such washerwomen?"

He caught her by the hands and drew her from among them, whereat wicked Gerlint despaired. Raging he said to her, "My mistress, great queen, shall wash clothes for thee no more."

When he had dragged her out before the door of the hall, the others, ye may trow me, peered through it to know his intent regarding her. He gripped her by the hair, asking leave of none, for his wrath was terrible, and smote off the queen's head; whereat the women all wailed and were sore afraid.

Then he came back and said, "Who further among these are her kin? Show them to me. There be none of them so proud but I will make bold to bow their heads."

Then said Hetel's child, weeping, "Spare them that are come to me for pardon, and that stand beside me. This is noble Ortrun with her Norman maidens."

When they that had won pardon were bidden stand back, Wate asked fiercely, "Where is the young Duchess Hergart, that took the king's cup-bearer to her high-born husband?"

They would not show her, but he strode up and said, "If the whole kingdom had been thine, who could have believed thee so arrogant? Poorly hast thou served Gudrun, thy mistress, in this land."

They cried all together, "Let her live." But old Wate answered, "That may not be. I am chamberlain and must see to the manners of the women."

Whereupon he struck off her head, albeit she was making to shelter behind Gudrun.

They rested over all now from the strife, and King Herwig came to Ludwig's hall with his comrades in battle covered with blood. When he saw Gudrun she gave him loving welcome.

Swiftly the knight unbound the sword from his side, and shook off his harness, laying it on his shield; then, with the stain of his armour upon him, he went and stood before the maiden. For love of her that day he had hewn his way often through the field.

Sir Ortwin came also, the King of Ortland, and Irolt and Morunc did off their harness, that they might be the cooler. They were merry of their cheer and were fain to come to the women.

Weary with slaying, the heroes of Denmark laid their shields and their weapons from their hands. They unloosed their helmets, and went in to the damsels. They both won sweet welcome from Gudrun. Irolt and Morunc bowed before the lovely maiden.

It was easy to see how welcome to her was the noble company; yea, of joyful mood was Hilda's daughter of the Hegeling land.

Then the lords and their men decided that they would seize all the other castles in the land, since they had won the goodly fortress of Kassîâne.

Old Wate was for burning the towers and palace. But Frute of Denmark said, "Not so. Here must my dear mistress dwell. Bid them bear the dead from the hall. So shall all these warriors fare the better in this land. For the castle is strong, wide and goodly. Let the blood be washed from the walls, that the gentle maidens be not loath to abide therein, while we carry the war further into Hartmut's kingdom."

They followed Frute's counsel, for he was wise. They bare from the castle many that were hewn with deep death-wounds, and they threw into the water them that lay slain before the gates. They gave four thousand or more to the sea; which was an hard task; but Frute urged them thereto.

Much that was to do was not done yet. Princess Ortrun was made captive in Ludwig's castle, and, with her, two-and-sixty knights and thirty maidens.

Then said Gudrun, "I will see to the maidens; they won my pardon. Let Wate do as he would with his own captives."

The King of the Moors was sweetly welcomed, as good knights should ever be after hard toil, and was thanked by the women, that he was come so far from Karadê to wage war.

To Horant of Denmark they commended all the prisoners in Kassîâne and likewise Gudrun and all her maidens. He was her next of kin; wherefore he was the more to be trusted. They made him master of forty strong towers and six wide halls by the sea,

besides three rich palaces. He was lord over all, and Princess Gudrun abode there by him.

They appointed a guard for the ships upon the water, and Sir Hartmut was led back to Kassîâne to his kinsmen, where the women, as well as the knights, lay captive. These also they bade them watch over, that none might escape; and they left behind a thousand bold men, that, with the Danes, saw to the safety of the women.

Wate and Frute were minded to hew more shields. So they made ready for their journey, with thirty thousand men. They let the land be harried over all with fire, and the kingdom in many quarters began to burn. Then was Hartmut for the first time sorrowful from his heart. The heroes of Sturm-land and of Denmark brake all the goodly castles that they found, and took all the plunder they could bring together. Many fair women were taken captive by the Hegelings.

Or Hilda's friends started for home, they razed to the ground six-and-twenty castles. They were proud and uplifted with the issue of the war, and afterwards they brought to Queen Hilda a thousand prisoners or more.

Hilda's banner was borne unhindered through Normandy and back to the shore, where they had left the noble maidens. Then they thought it was time to be gone, nor desired to tarry longer.

They that had been left in Hartmut's halls rode down from the castle to meet their friends, and greeted with good will both old and young.

The knight of Denmark said, "How hath it prospered with you, young warriors?"

King Ortwin answered, "On such wise that I must ever thank my kinsmen. We have taken sore

vengeance in battle, and done a thousand times more to them than ever they did to us."

"Whom shall we leave here to guard the kingdom?" said old Wate then. "Bid fair Gudrun come down to us, and we will back to the Hegelings, and show Queen Hilda what we have brought her home."

"Horant the Dane, and Morunc shall be left here," said both old and young. "They shall tarry behind with a thousand bold men."

And these knights must needs obey them.

The Hegelings led away many captives. When they were minded to depart, they brought down to the ships all manner of things that they had seized, and likewise that which was their own. What they carried away from the strangers they could show at home without shame.

Then they bade Hartmut leave the castle, with five hundred of his men, that were all prisoners for ransom, and bound. Many a weary day they endured among their foemen afterwards. They led away high-born Ortrun and her maidens also, to suffer great sorrow. Now that these needs must part from their friends they could understand how it had been aforetime with Gudrun and her damsels.

So they bare off the captives, and the conquered castles were left under the rule of Horant and Morunc. When the others sailed away, these tarried behind with a thousand or more of their bold men.

Hartmut entreated the Hegelings, and said, "If ye will but leave me free in my father's land, my life and all I have shall be yours."

But old Wate answered, "Nay, we will keep you safe by us. I know not, in faith, why my nephew leadeth to his land one that had gladly taken from him his life and goods. Were he willing, I know a

way whereby his enemy might be rid of his weary bonds."

"What could it advantage thee," said Sir Ortwin, "to slay them all? Hartmut and his knights shall live in hope of better days. I will bring them without blame to my mother Hilda."

They carried all their great possessions on to the ships, with gold and jewels, horses and apparel. They had won their heart's desire, and they that before had wailed bitterly were all heard singing.

THIRTIETH ADVENTURE

HOW THEY SENT ENVOYS TO HILDA

THE Hegeling host set out joyfully to return home to their land.

Of them they had brought with them full three thousand tarried behind, dead or wounded, each mourned by his kinsmen.

Their ships sailed smoothly along with favouring winds, and they that carried treasure with them were high-hearted. However they compassed it, this is certain: they sent forward envoys that bare the news to the Queen of the Hegelings.

These made all the haste they could—this is sooth that I say—and reached their land in I know not how many days. Never had Hilda heard aught that pleased her better than when they told her that King Ludwig was slain.

She said, "How standeth it with my daughter and her maidens?"

"King Herwig bringeth thee back his dear one. Good knights could not better have prospered, for they have with them Ortrun, and Hartmut her brother, both captives."

"Good news ye bring me," said the noble woman, "for they have made heavy my heart and my life. I will upbraid them for it when mine eyes behold them. Openly and in secret I have endured much

woe. I will reward you, ye envoys, that you have told me this thing, by reason whereof my great sorrow hath vanished. It is meet that I give you my gold."

But they answered, "Great Queen, we bring so much treasure with us that it will not be an hard matter for thee to make us rich. If any among us desire naught from thee, it is not that we scorn it. Our ships are laden with bright gold. And we have left good chamberlains behind us to guard it on the journey."

When she had heard their message, Queen Hilda commanded meat and drink to be made ready for the dear guests that came to her, and likewise chairs and benches, where they were to sit. She knew how to order all things as befitted her honour. The folk were not idle at Matelâne. Down on the plain and on the shore they set carpenters to work, that Herwig and high-born Gudrun might sit proudly.

I cannot tell you if aught untoward befell them on the sea. In six weeks Ortwin's host was at Matelâne, bringing the princess and many beautiful maidens.

We are told, and may trow it, that, or they got back, their adventure had endured for a year at the shortest. It was in a May-time when they brought their captives home, and they drew nigh with joyful sounds, albeit they thought on the toil that was over. When they saw their ships before Matelâne, a loud din was heard of trumpets and sackbuts, of flutes and horns, and a great beating of drums.

Old Wate's vessel was now in the harbour; then came also the knight of Ortland; and Hilda and her court rode down to the shore from the castle of Matelâne to meet them. Gudrun likewise was there, and many beautiful women with her.

Queen Hilda and her escort dismounted from their horses on the sand. Then bold Irolt led forward fair Gudrun. But albeit Hilda had known her well aforetime, she knew not now which of them was she. She saw full an hundred women that came with her.

"I know not whom to greet as my dear daughter," she said. "She is grown a stranger to me. Welcome are my friends that are come down from the waves."

"This is thy daughter," said Sir Irolt.

She went towards her, and who could weigh out gold to balance their joy when they kissed? Now was their sorrow ended.

Queen Hilda greeted Irolt and all his men, and bowed low to Wate, saying, "Welcome, knight of Sturm-land. Thou hast served me well; who could reward thee duly with less than a kingdom and a crown?"

"Right gladly will serve thee wherein I can, till my last day," answered Wate. Whereupon she kissed him for love, and did the like to Ortwinn.

Now was Herwig come up also with his proud and valiant warriors. He led forward young Ortrun by the hand, and Gudrun prayed her mother sweetly. "Kiss, dear queen, this high-born maiden. She often served me and showed me honour in my exile."

"I will kiss none here except I know her. Who are her kinsmen, and what is the name of the maiden that thou wouldst have me kiss on such friendly wise?"

"It is Ortrun, the young princess of Normandy," answered Gudrun.

"Her I will not kiss. How canst thou ask it? It would beseem me better to have her slain, for her kinsmen have done me bitter wrong. The tears that I have wept have been the dearest delight of their eyes."

"This lovely maiden hath done naught, O Queen, to work thee woe," said Gudrun. "Think how I were to pity, dear mother, if any slew my kinsmen. Show grace to this forlorn one."

Hilda would not do it, but still Gudrun implored her with tears, till she said, "I cannot longer see thee weep. If she hath done aught to serve thee, she shall enjoy the reward of it in this country."

So she kissed Ludwig's child, and the other women there for Gudrun's sake.

Then came Hildeburg also from a foreign land, that had washed with her. Frute led her forward, and Gudrun said, "Greet Hildeburg, dear mother. What is better than the faith of a friend? Had any a kingdom full of gold and precious stones, to Hildeburg alone should he give it."

"They have told me," answered the queen, "how she shared with thee both good and evil fortune, and never shall I sit at ease under my crown, till I have rewarded her truly."

When she had kissed Hildeburg and the others, Queen Hilda said to Frute, "I shame me not that I came forth to meet thee and thy warriors. Ye be welcome, all ye knights, to the land of the Hegelings." Whereupon they all bowed them deep.

When she had spoken, they saw the King of the Moors and his men, that disembarked on the sand with a joyful noise. The highest among them sang a song of Araby.

Queen Hilda tarried till he was come up from the landing-place. Then she greeted the Prince of Karadé sweetly. "Welcome Sir Siegfried, King of Moorland. I will not cease to reward thee with my service, because thou hast helped me to avenge my wrong."

"Whatso I can do for thee, O Queen, I do gladly;

but now I return to the land that, from my youth up, hath been mine for many a day, till I rode against Herwig, with whom I will war no more."

Thereupon they unloaded the ships, and carried on to the beach all manner of things that they had brought home with them; and when it began to grow cool towards evening, they waited there no longer, but went to the place that had been prepared for them.

Queen Hilda rode on to the field with her guests. Pavilions and tents adorned with gold were seen before Matelâne. They found many a rich seat there, and were diligently waited on.

Queen Hilda had bidden them take so much money with them that they needed not to leave surety or pledge behind them. In no country was there ever so good a hostess as the noble widow. Her guests paid neither for their wine nor for their meat.

There the weary ones rested till the fifth day; yet, albeit the others were well entreated Hartmut was heavy with grief, till the beautiful maidens prayed Hilda to grant him her pardon.

Her daughter, with Ortrun, went to where she sat and said, "Dearest mother, remember now how none should return evil for evil. Wrong not thy virtue in the matter of King Hartmut."

But Hilda answered, "Dearest daughter, ask not this thing of me, for through him I have suffered greatly, and he shall atone for his pride in my prison."

Then Gudrun, with full sixty maidens, fell at the queen's feet. Ortrun said, "Let him live, and I will stand surety for it, that he will gladly serve thee. Show grace to my brother, and thou shalt win honour thereby, if he wear again his crown."

They wept all together, because he lay bound in strong chains. Their eyes were wet for the sake of

Hartmut, King of Normandy, for heavy fetters hung on him and his men.

Then said the queen, "Give over weeping. They shall come to court loosed from their bonds. They must give me their word that they will not seek to flee, and swear an oath that none will ride hence without my leave."

So they loosed the noble captives, and Gudrun gave order that they should be bathed and afterwards featly apparelled and brought to court. They were all brave knights and profited thereby.

When they saw Hartmut stand by his warriors, they had never found a goodlier man. Amid all his sorrows he stood as he had been drawn on parchment with a pencil; for which reason the women looked on him kindly, and he won their trust the sooner.

And so their hate was ended, and they forgot that ever their knights had slain one another.

Then Herwig took thought how he might quit the land of the Hegelings with honour. He bade them carry the weapons and apparel to the horses, and they loaded his sumpters. But when Hilda heard it, she was very loath to let him depart.

She said, "Tarry here, Sir Herwig, yet awhile. So much joy hath befallen me through thee that I shall always desire to serve thee. Ride not hence. I would hold a hightide or my guests go their ways."

But Herwig answered, "Thou knowest well, O Queen, how they that their kinsmen send into other kings' lands see their own gladly again. Scarce, for longing, can they await our journey home."

Said Hilda, "Grant me this honour and this joy. Naught that I desire more could befall me. Do me this grace, King Herwig: let my daughter be crowned beside me, a bereaved woman."

He was loath to tarry, but she prayed and entreated; and the captives were afterwards set free because of this. When he had promised to do it willingly, Queen Hilda was assured of great joy.

She bade them prepare yet better seats, where many knights sat beside her afterwards in honour at a hightide, the fame whereof hath been noised abroad.

And there King Herwig bade them crown fair Gudrun. None of them that were come with them departed or the hightide was begun at Matelâne.

Sixty lovely maidens or more were apparelled by Hilda, for praise and honour were dear to her, and to full an hundred beautiful women she gave good raiment. Neither were they forgotten that were brought captive to the land. Each of them was well clad. Fair Hilda wrought many wonders with her gifts.

Irolt was chamberlain, and to that end must needs hasten to her land, where he delayed not to appear. Wate, the hero of Sturm-land, was the lord high steward; and they sent straightway for bold Frute of Denmark, and bade him be cup-bearer.

Whereupon Frute said, "If thou desire it, O Queen, I will do it gladly: and thou shalt give me the kingdom, with twelve rich banners."

"That may not be," answered Hilda, and laughed merrily, "for Horant my kinsman is lord of Denmark, and it is as his friend that thou shalt be cup-bearer in his stead. Albeit he is in Normandy, thou must think on him here at home."

The serving-men were taught their offices, and Queen Hilda bade the chamberlain divide the rich stuffs that had lain long in chests and closets. So they carried them out, and divided them with a good will among the guests. None was so lowly that he received not good apparel.

If they invited strangers to the land, I know not why they did it, for they had brought full thirty thousand from Normandy.

Where could any that desired to clothe such a multitude win the wherewithal to do it? If the whole of Arabia had been his, I ween, he had not found better raiment than was given to the guests. By the wish of Gudrun also was it done.

When the lovely maiden sat among the guests, she sent for Ortwin, that she might urge him to woo Ortrun. Ludwig's daughter sat there with the others beside her.

The hero of Ortland went to her chamber, and many damsels gave him sweet welcome. His sister arose from her chair and took him by the hand, and went with him apart to the end of the hall.

"Dearest brother," she said, "follow my counsel and I will advise thee faithfully. If thou wouldst have any joy in thy life, woo the sister of Hartmut, compass it how thou wilt."

"Deemest thou that good?" answered the bold knight. "Hartmut is no such dear friend of mine, and also we slew Ludwig. Did she think thereon when she lay by my side, I ween she would sometimes sigh."

"Thou must serve her on such wise as to hinder that. I counsel thee in better faith than I ever showed to any in this world. If thou win her to wife, she will bring thee joy."

The noble warrior answered, "If she be known to thee for such an one as the folk and the land may serve, and hath the breeding that goeth therewith, I will wed her gladly."

"Thou wilt never know a heavy day with her," said Gudrun.

He told his friends, but Hilda was against it, till

he spake of the matter with Herwig, that urged him thereto with true heart; likewise Frute, who said, "Wed her, and thou shalt win many good knights. We will end this hate between us, and even in the manner that I will tell thee: we will wed Hildeburg to King Hartmut."

Bold Herwig spake out his mind: "To my thinking the maiden did well. She were a great queen if she ruled over Hartmut's kingdom, for he hath full a thousand lordly castles under him."

Then fair Gudrun talked of the matter with Hildeburg in secret, for she was fain to serve her, and said, "Dear friend, if thou wouldst win reward for all thou hast done for me, there awaiteth thee in Normandy a rich crown."

But beautiful Hildeburg answered, "I were loath to wed one that never inclined toward me with heart or soul. Grew we old together, we might often be found in anger."

"Thou must guard against that," said Princess Gudrun. "I will bid them fetch Hartmut straightway, and ask him if he and his knights would be loosed from their bonds, and sent back to their land. If he thank me, I will exhort him to serve us with the better will, and will ask him if he be minded so to wed as to win me and my kinsmen to his friends."

They brought Hartmut, King of Normandy, with whom came Frute, to where the noble maidens sat before Hilda's daughter in her chamber. Through her counsel they afterwards forgot their many woes.

When the son of Ludwig went through the palace, they all, from the highest to the lowest, stood up from their seats for his sake; for he was a bold knight, and thereto rich and noble.

Then Gudrun, the fair maiden, bade him sit down

—she had never denied him her greeting—and Hilda's daughter said, "Thou shalt sit by my friend, Hartmut, that hath washed with me aforetime, for thy warriors."

"Thou upbraidest me with that, O high king's daughter! What they did to thy hurt was also to my sorrow. My mother still bade them hide it from me, that I knew naught thereof: neither knew my father, nor any of his men."

The maiden answered, "I cannot arrange this matter otherwise: I must speak with thee apart, that none may hear, save thee and me alone."

Whereupon Hartmut thought in his heart, "God grant she meaneth truly by me!"

She let none but Frute go with them. Then she said to the king, "Hartmut, if thou but do willingly what I would have thee do, thou shalt be parted from all thy sorrow."

"I know thy virtue to be such," answered Hartmut, "that thou wouldst counsel me to nothing that is not honourable and good, and I am unaware of aught in my heart that could hinder me from obeying thee gladly."

She said, "I will show thee how to save thy life. I and my kinsmen will give thee a wife, that so thou mayest preserve thy kingdom and thine honour, and the old hate may be remembered no more."

"Tell me, Princess, whom thou wouldst give me. I would liefer perish than wed on such wise that my kinsmen at home deemed it a shame. In good sooth I had sooner they saw me dead."

"I will give Ortrun, thy beautiful sister, to my dear brother to wife, and thou shalt take Hildeburg, the noble king's daughter. Thou canst not in all the world win a maiden of higher lineage."

"If thou bring it to pass as thou hast said, and thy brother Ortwin taketh Ortrun, the fair damsel, truly to wife, I will take Hildeburg, that there may be an end of all hate for ever."

"I have brought the matter so far that he hath vowed to do it," she answered. "And if it content thee to receive back thy land and heritage, with the goodly castles therein, it may well content thee also to make Hildeburg queen there."

"I promise it gladly," he said, and gave his hand on it. "So soon as my sister standeth under the crown beside Ortwin, I will not grudge Hildeburg the right to share with me the giving of royal gifts and feoffs."

When he had sworn this, the princess said, "I would fain make the friendship yet faster, that it may endure evermore. We will give the sister of Herwig to the Prince of Karadê to wife."

Never was so great a reconciliation as the maiden brought to pass. The bold and high-born knights came together, and Frute of Denmark counselled them to summon Ortwin and the King of the Moors. These came to court featly apparelled. Gudrun saw to it also that word was sent to Wate and Irolt, who conferred apart and approved the plan.

Said old Wate, "Who can make an end of the old hate, till Ortrun and Hartmut go before Hilda and fall at the noble queen's feet? If only she be willing, we may all be at one."

"Let me tell thee this: she hateth them not. Behold how Ortrun hath on the same apparel that my mother gave to me and my maidens. I will gladly be the peace-maker. The homeless ones may trust me for that."

Then they bade Ortrun and the fair Hildeburg go into the ring, and Ortwin and Hartmut took them for their wives.

"I am fain," said Queen Hilda, "that this peace may endure."

Ortwin drew the young maid forth from the circle, and put a gold ring on her white hand. So all her heavy sorrow ended:

Then Hartmut embraced the maid of Ireland, and each slipped a gold ring on the hand of the other. There was no fault in her to work him annoy, and Hartmut and Hildeburg were truly one.

Then said Hilda's daughter, "My Lord Herwig, is thy kingdom so nigh at hand that, on the manner they deemed best, they could bring thy sister to the King of Karadê, here in my mother's land?"

King Herwig answered, "I will tell thee. He that rideth in haste may make the journey in twelve days, but it will go hard with any that would fetch the maiden hither or I have sent her mine own escort."

Then said Hilda's daughter, "Gladly would I have thee do it. Thou thyself shalt win much joy thereby. My mother will give thee the needful meat and raiment. Bring us the maiden, that I may praise thee from my heart."

"Where can she find apparel?" asked Prince Herwig. "The Prince of Karadê laid waste my lands and burned my castle. I lost all my sister's fine raiment."

But the King of the Moors answered that he would have her, stood she only in her shift.

Thereupon Herwig sent an hundred knights for her, and bade them speed on the way. He entreated Wate and Frute to ride with them, the which was no little labour; yet they consented to it for the good knight's sake.

They spurred forward night and day. When they found the maiden, Herwig's kinsmen had much ado

to hinder Wate from fighting with the folk there. Together with four-and-twenty damsels the knights brought her from her home.

Wate escorted her from the castle to the beach, where he found two galleys and two freight ships. Of these they took one, and sailed away in haste. The wind favoured them, and they got back in twelve days.

When they brought the princess to the Hegeling land, the knights forgot not to hasten down to the shore with banners, and they that had sworn to win the love of the maiden kept their oath well.

How had noble maidens greeted one another more sweetly? Fair damsels went forward to meet them, and also high-born Hilda with her women. Albeit her land had been laid waste with fire, Herwig's sister came not alone.

Full three hundred men followed Hilda from the castle. As King Herwig drew nigh, he rode many a stately course in the tourney, to show her honour. The others did the like, and loud was the clash of shields.

The four great kings rode towards her, and, when they were met, there was striving among the knights, nor could they agree thereon which was first among the fair ones. They praised the virtue of all, and so the matter rested.

Herwig's sister kissed Gudrun and all the others straightway, and went on to the sand, where she stood under a tent of rich silk. What they should do there she marvelled much.

Then they bade the King of Karadê go thither, and said to the maiden, "Wilt thou have this man to thy husband? He will make thee ruler of nine lands."

She saw many bold and swarthy knights beside

him, but the father and mother of the hero were not of one race, and his skin was as white as a Christian's. Like spun gold the hair lay on his head. Certes, she had been unwise had she denied him her love. Yet she was slow to take him, as is the way with maidens.

When they offered the King of the Moors her love the good knight said, "She pleaseth me so well that I will not cease to serve her, till I have won to her side."

So the knight and the damsel were betrothed, and they and the others wearied till the day was done, when they all became man and wife at one time. Four kings' daughters were anointed to wear the crown in the presence of the warriors.

THIRTY-FIRST ADVENTURE

HOW THE FOUR KINGS HELD A HIGHTIDE IN HILDA'S LAND

THE kings likewise were anointed, as beseemed their honour, and five hundred youths or more were dubbed knights. The great hightide was held in Hilda's kingdom, at Matelâne, upon the shore afore the castle; and the queen gave apparel to all her guests.

Ha! how old Wate tilted in front of the seats! And Irolt and Frute, the knights of Denmark, did the like. Loud was the splinter of the lances couched in the hands of the heroes.

Albeit little wind blew, the dust made a darkness as of night. It was all one to the valiant warriors if they soiled the goodly apparel of the fair women. They tourneyed without cease in the lists at Matelâne.

But they left not the maidens there. They led them, together with fair Hilda, into the wide windows to rejoice the eyes of the knights. Full an hundred damsels in gay apparel sat by the four queens.

The wandering minstrel folk must needs show themselves that day. All that they could do they did right gladly; and on the morrow, after early Mass, the heroes were seen tilting again. What could be more fitting there than joy and a merry din? The palace echoed with all manner of music, which endured till the fourth day. The noble company lay not idle.

FOUR KINGS HOLD A HIGHTIDE 221

There was one come to court that gave freely, and knew how the minstrel folk desired gain. He began to give with good will, that they might prosper the better. It was the King of Zealand that threw them his gift the first with a ready hand, that all who saw it and received it gave him thanks. Sir Herwig gave of his red gold a thousand pounds at the least. His kinsmen and his vassals gave apparel, and many won a horse with a goodly saddle, that had seldom ridden afore.

When Ortwin saw it he began to strive with him; The King of Ortland gave them raiment so rich that if any have worn better since, we have neither seen nor heard tell of it. He and his knights stood, or long, with no vesture left.

None could recount to the end how many costly garments and goodly horses the King of the Moors left behind him. They that received them could not look for better. Young and old became rich.

Then was Hartmut seen giving also, as if his heritage had not been laid waste. So free they found him that none could have given more. How quickly they that desired it won from him and his friends, that were called captives, whatever they had! Hartmut and his men grudged the folk nothing.

Fair Gudrun lacked not love for Hildeburg of Ireland, that had often carried the clothes with her to the beach when she had washed aforetime. She saw well to it that she won the favour of Hartmut for the maiden.

She bade such treasure be brought forth from her chamber for him, that it might be said of her, were she well minded to any, she could bestow silver and apparel and heavy gold without stint.

They saw the knight of Sturm-land rise from his

seat in such goodly raiment that no king, or king's vassal, hath ever worn better. None denied any that asked, but only Wate gave vesture so costly that richer hath not been found on a king's body.

It was covered with a precious network of gold and jewels; the knight himself had come to court in it. In every mesh lay stones of divers names; whereby men knew it was woven in the land of Abalie.

The heroes took Wate and his men by the hand. All that saw it must needs tell the bold knight the truth: that his gift was more than kingly. He who won it was for long a lord of great wealth.

Irolt showed his mind plainly: how that, whatever he gave, he rued it not.

Frute of Denmark was Hilda's chamberlain, and served his mistress so well that the tale of it was told for long after. Then they deemed it time to be gone; the hightide was ended.

Under the favour of Gudrun Hartmut covenanted with his enemies as beseemed his honour, and he and his men returned to their country in better case than any had believed. Hilda parted with them sweetly. She and her daughter and all their attendants rode out from the castle with Hildeburg.

When they desired to be gone, Sir Hartmut took his leave, and Queen Hilda gave him an escort by land and sea. They won also a strong host in them that Ortwin and Herwig sent with them; and of their own men they brought back fully a thousand to their home.

On every side the women were seen kissing, and many parted there that saw one another no more.

Ortwin and high-born Herwig went with them to where their ships lay. It was Irolt that escorted them to their own country, and him the king charged to

declare to Horant of Denmark on what footing they had quitted the Hegelings. Hartmut took many valiant knights with him.

I know not at what hour, late or early, they sailed up to Kassîâne, but all the folk rejoiced with a will. After their sore travail God granted them, I ween, great gladness.

When Irolt told Horant in Normandy how the kings had sent him with them, the knight answered, "Then is it meet we make room for them. They rejoice to be home, and I, in like manner, can scarce await the day that will bring me to my country."

We will leave now this matter of their journey, sure that never knights or their kinsmen parted better friends at a hightide. Only the men of Karadê made merry still yet in the land.

THIRTY-SECOND ADVENTURE

HOW THE OTHERS JOURNEYED HOME

THEY tarried by the Hegelings no longer, but with joyful sounds led Herwig's sister away to Alzabê. They had prospered, and the proud knights sang merrily as they crossed the sea.

“Queen Hilda took leave of them kindly. However rich the men of Herwig were when they came there, she would not let them go without her gift. It must be written down a marvel that any could bestow so freely.

“Now happiness be thine,” said Gudrun. “Grieve no more for the dead. I and my lord will serve thee so well that no sorrow shall abide with thee. Thou shalt profit by the goodness of Herwig.”

“Dearest daughter,” answered the queen, “if thou wouldst do me a pleasure, let thine envoys visit me among the Hegelings three times every year.”

Whereupon noble Gudrun said, “It shall be done as thou desirest, my mother.”

Then amid laughter and weeping she and her maidens went their way from Matêlane, looking back as they rode. Their woe was ended. None were ever seen so fair. They brought out the goodly horses, equipped with bridles of red gold and narrow reins, that were to carry her and her damsels. The women were not minded, I ween, to tarry there longer.

They that rode with her on maidenly wise with golden circlets on their loose hair, were loath to part, I trow, from Ortrun and her followers. Had any been fairer than Ortrun, Gudrun had been sorry.

Then Ortwin's dear one began to thank noble Gudrun that her brother Hartmut had won back his kingdom of Normandy through her.

"God reward thee, Gudrun. I am evermore eased of all woe."

She thanked also Gudrun's mother Hilda, that she was to wear the crown by King Ortwin in Ortland, and to be called a queen there. Thereupon Hilda answered that she would never grudge it to her.

Ortwin and Herwig sware a binding oath that they would fill their princely office without blame, as becomed their high birth, and that if any man did aught to the hurt of either, they would take him captive and slay him.

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